

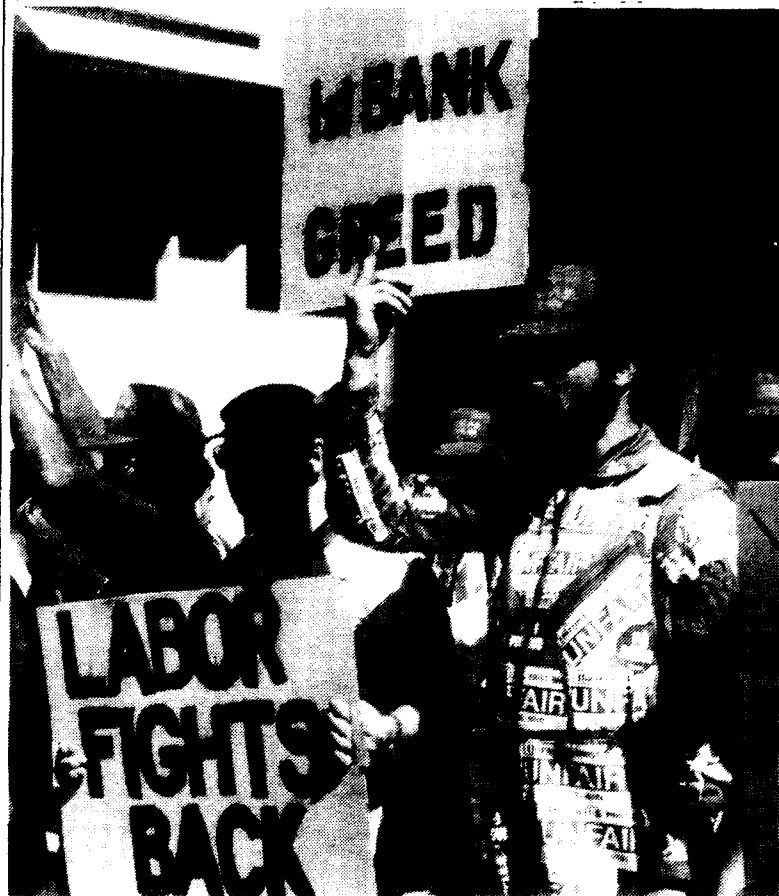
The politics of **COMPARABLE WORTH**

Page 5 *Last month's
Washington state decision
is not the final word.*

CORPORATE CAMPAIGN RULING	2
MEXICO AFTER THE QUAKES	3
THE SINKING OF MITTERRAND	7
APPALACHIA'S APPALSHOP	8

SOUTH AFRICA AND ANGOLA	11
HISPANICS IN THE '80S	12
ELLA LEFFLAND'S FICTION	13
SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE	14

THE STORY INSIDE



Union's right to boycott upheld

By Drew Mendelson

MINNEAPOLIS

In a telling upset for the Hormel Corporation, a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) administrative law judge has allowed union members on strike against the company to continue a pressure campaign against Hormel's financial backers. NLRB attorneys here had gone to court on September 21 to obtain a temporary federal injunction prohibiting the union from engaging in any "secondary boycotts" against the First Bank system, which the union says is the principal minority stockholder in Hormel. Union officials had expected a long fight—three years—to overturn the injunction. During the protracted battle the officials had feared they would have been prohibited from distributing literature or otherwise telling the public about First Bank's close connection to Hormel.

The prohibition would have been a critical blow to the corporate campaign the 1,500 union members of Local P-9 have launched. The campaign's goal is to force Hormel to rescind a 23 percent wage cut it has imposed on the workers.

In charges filed with the NLRB, Hormel contended that First Bank was an innocent bystander to the dispute between the company and local P-9. Hormel charged the union was urging the public to stop dealing with First Bank and was pressuring depositors (including large union pension fund depositors) to withdraw money from the bank. Such pressure, said the Minneapolis NLRB, constituted a secondary boycott, which is illegal under the National Labor Relations Act. As usually applied, the rule against secondary boycotts protects a company not a party to a labor dispute from being picketed or from having its products boycotted just because it sells a product made by a company that is on strike. For example, under the secondary boycott prohibition, a union would not be allowed to picket a supermarket that continued to sell milk products made by a company that was being struck.

Follow the money

The labor movement has recognized that boycotts and other economic actions against corporations have become a primary weapon. Strikes often have little impact against conglomerates with multiple manufacturing plants. The Food and Beverage Trades Department of the AFL-CIO has an active "corporate campaign" division that gathers data on corporations accused of union-busting and advises unions on economic tactics to force corporations to the bargaining table. One principal item of advice the AFL-CIO offers in such campaigns is "follow the money"—that is, find out what are the financial connections of a corporation—then place pressure on these connections. Such a technique was used effectively in forcing J.P. Stevens to negotiate with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, ending a 17-year organizing battle.

The same labor consultant who brought about the Stevens victory, Ray Rogers of Corporate Campaign, Inc., is the consultant for P-9. Research by Rogers uncovered a close connection between the

Hormel Corporation and First Bank. Rogers advised P-9 that if public pressure could be brought to bear on First Bank, the pressure would "follow the money" into Hormel's boardroom and bring about real negotiations.

There is a constitutional loophole in the NLRA rule against secondary boycotts. This loophole is popularly known as the "publicity proviso," which says that the rule against secondary boycotts cannot restrict workers' rights to free speech.

According to Rogers, all Local P-9 has been doing is distributing leaflets and using the media to tell the public about First Bank's involvement with Hormel. But Ronald M. Sharp, director of Region 18 of the NLRB in Minneapolis, issued a complaint against the union on September 10 stating that Local P-9 has "threatened, coerced and restrained First Bank System..." with an object of requiring the bank to "cease doing business with Hormel...." As a consequence, ruled Sharp, Local P-9 has been engaging in unfair labor practices within the meaning of the NLRA.

Ordinarily such a complaint would wend its way slowly through the levels of the labor board, going to the enforcement division that would seek a court date and a hearing on whether an injunction should be imposed. But when a charge of secondary boycott is involved the NLRB and the courts act with extraordinary swiftness. Only 11 days after the board issued its complaint, board attorneys were in 8th District Court before Judge Edward Devitt. He ruled that he had reasonable cause to believe the acts P-9 had been charged with had been committed. As a result, the judge commented, he had no choice but to issue the injunction. The injunction was a very broad one, and virtually excluded any action by Local P-9 involving First Bank.

During the proceedings, P-9 attorneys had argued that a broad injunction violated union members' free-speech rights. But Devitt said no. At one point a Hormel attorney commented that he felt the workers' free-speech rights should be suspended until the issue was decided.

Devitt replied in his order that, "Who is right in these contentions is a decision for the NLRB to make.... My authority in the matter is very limited."

Immediately after the hearing Rogers commented that he was convinced the workers have the right under the constitution to distribute information about First Bank's connection to Hormel. He said that he was willing to go to jail to defend these rights and that the P-9 leadership had discussed plans for mass demonstrations by members and supporters. As it turned out, neither Rogers nor the union members were forced to take such action. What happened in court the next day came as an amazing surprise to P-9. Union attorneys entered the courtroom of administrative Judge Harold Bernard fully expecting the predicted drawn-out battle. What they experienced was an upset victory nobody could have anticipated.

The hearing was to decide whether or not the temporary injunction should be made permanent. NLRB attorney Jim Fox summarized their case against the union. He told the judge that "mass picketing" by the union constituted a secondary boycott against First Bank. The judge asked Fox to explain how the union members could be enjoined from picketing the bank and yet still be allowed to exercise their free-speech rights. Attorney Fox couldn't provide an answer satisfactory to Judge Bernard. Bernard, ordering Fox and P-9 attorney Jim Youngdahl to approach the bench, directed the two sides to settle the issue then and there. A five-hour negotiating session ensued.

With four busloads of P-9 members in the courthouse hall waiting for the negotiations to end, Fox and Youngdahl worked out a compromise in which the NLRB agreed to drop the secondary boycott complaint. As part of the settlement, P-9 was freed from making any admission that it had done anything wrong. In return, P-9 agreed to voluntarily limit to four the number of strikers distributing literature outside First Bank branches. The settlement was reached after Bernard ordered the parties to reach a compromise that took into consideration P-9's First Amendment rights. As part of the settlement, any future complaints by either side will go directly to federal court. This will jump over the labor board, which P-9 claimed was politically biased in favor of Hormel.

Not particularly pleased with the settlement were attorneys for Hormel. They had no active part in the court proceedings, which were between the NLRB and P-9. The temporary injunction will be lifted as soon as the NLRB in Washington, D.C., approves the settlement.

Rogers reported that the union will now expand its corporate campaign to leaflet supermarkets and other Hormel outlets. It will not call for a boycott against the bank, he reported. Instead, the union will concentrate on a consumer information campaign—which, according to Rogers, was the union's intention all along. ■ **Drew Mendelson** is the editor of the St. Paul-based *Union Advocate*.



Our new business manager

Two months after the fact, we are happy to announce the arrival of our new Business Manager, Alfred Dale.

Al is a Methodist minister with a substantial business and political background. He comes from a Nonpartisan League family back in North Dakota, where his father was State Treasurer from 1933 to 1935, and his grandfather was the Socialist mayor of Rugby from 1914 to 1916. In the three years before joining *In These Times*, he and his wife Dorothy were research consultants to the Methodist Church of Fiji as missionaries of the United Methodist Church. Al's main business background has been as executive vice president (Provost) to the Central YMCA Community College in Chicago, a post he held from 1969 to 1975. As such, he was responsible for seeing that the college lived within its budget, a job almost as thankless as being *In These Times'* business manager. Al was also campus minister and director of Ecumenical House at San Francisco State College 1961-68. ■



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Mexico's future shaky in quake recovery

By William Gasperini

MEXICO CITY

Proud of itself, the city of Mexico-

Tenochtitlan arises;

This is our glory, our heritage

Who could move the cement of the skies?

With our arrows, our shields, the great city stands;

Mexico-Tenochtitlan subsists!

—ancient Aztec poem

TO UPDATE THE ABOVE VERSE, one could change "arrows and shields" to "determination and strength." For, although battered severely by the earthquakes of September 19-20, this monstrous megalopolis can survive anything, if its people are any indication.

Aside from the heavy damages wrought by the quakes—at least 5,000 dead, 15,000 wounded, 400,000 homeless, 1,200 buildings destroyed or damaged—the most salient aspect of the catastrophe was the spontaneous response to it by city residents. In fact, the selfless outpouring of volunteerism in the days following the first jolt at 7:19 a.m. September 19 became a cause of concern for the government, and may pre-empt a new course for the city's future.

The prestigious newspaper *Excelsior* wrote in an editorial: "The disaster revealed the reality of the post-revolutionary governments: improvisation, corruption, centralism bordering on the absurd, ecological disaster, the impotence of the common person and lack of moral authority in the exercise of power. A Leviathan; a monster which eats its own self. But by looking in the mirror, horrified by what it sees, this may give rise to the possibility for change."

The "common person" was anything but impotent after September 19. Thousands of people immediately went into action, picking through mounds of rubble that were once buildings, pulling out survivors, giving them medical attention. They directed traffic, brought food to rescuers and organized brigades right off the street.

The authorities, of course, also responded, but in the fashion Mexicans have become accustomed to: slowly and bureaucratically. They implemented an antiquated emergency plan, the "DN-III," and moved to cordon off disaster areas and send in "prepared" crews. While these teams, including soldiers, did contribute to the rescue work, general opinion credited the public response with saving most of the 2,000 rescued from the rubble.

To be sure, the government, and especially President Miguel de la Madrid, dealt with the tragedy as best they could. The president travelled throughout damaged areas, comforting victims' relatives, consulting with officials and cancelling other plans in order to remain "with the people."

Taking control

But there was no hiding the authorities' edginess as they "took control" of the rescue work, even going so far as to decree that the "untrained" could not assist. The controversy over statistics also illustrated how the crisis had been handled—or mishandled. One week after the initial quake, the government announced that 1,840 had died. The city's mayor, meanwhile, had already said the toll was 4,000, while the police said 4,765. And there was no hiding government irritation at U.S. Ambassador John Gavin's prediction that more than 10,000 had perished.

Why the discrepancies? The government's tally included deaths only where certificates had been issued. Nonetheless, most were stunned at the estimate when it was common knowledge that more than 4,000 dead had already been counted. Also, the low figure had been announced after hundreds of decomposing or burned bodies that could not be identified had been placed



As the days passed, charges grew that corruption and lax enforcement of building codes had contributed to the disaster.

in common graves.

According to some, national pride and a need to deflect responsibility for losses led to the low official estimates. As the days passed, charges grew that corruption and lax enforcement of building codes had contributed to the disaster. This was particularly true at the large Tlatelolco apartment complex, where residents of one collapsed building had complained for years about unrepaired damages (see accompanying story). The presence of famed tenor Plácido Domingo at the site, helping dig for an uncle and three cousins, drew attention to the building code question.

A visit to any of the major disaster sites immediately gave one the sense that the 10,000 death toll estimate may turn out to be correct. At the six-story mound of concrete beams, walls, steel rod reinforcements and crushed beds that was once the Benito Juárez Hospital, rescuers who continued to tunnel into the wreckage a week after the first quake said only 500 of an

estimated 1,000 persons had been found. At other sites, no one hid the fact that hundreds of persons remained trapped and would increase the death toll.

Complicating the situation was the sensitive issue of how to balance fears of epidemic with relatives' pleas. As rescuers would find an occasional survivor under the rubble, relatives of others would pressure the authorities to continue the search, although hope dwindled with each passing day.

At the Juárez site, for example, two women and two newborn babies were found alive seven days after the quake, just as the debate over when to begin demolition of the ruins grew more heated.

An army major at the site made the decision the next day to begin hauling away slabs of concrete with cranes, overruling the "human moles" volunteer rescue team that stressed that more babies were alive inside and the heavy equipment would upset the delicate balance. Soon after, a

giant piece of wall fell onto what had been the maternity ward of the hospital, crushing the 80 infants—many of whom were still alive.

Another embarrassment for authorities arose with the discovery of prisoners who perished when a judicial building collapsed. At least 10 of the victims, including a lawyer and university student, were found bound, gagged and showing signs of torture, according to the Red Cross. As word of the prisoners' fate reached local residents, officials denied any wrongdoing.

Of the 1,200 buildings destroyed or damaged, 373 fell completely, while another 350 suffered enough damage to require demolition. While the damages could not be underestimated, many people, particularly those in the important tourist trade, expressed irritation that many press reports had implied that the entire city had fallen. Even in the hardest-hit downtown area, the majority of buildings remain standing, and

Continued on page 6

Tenants organize in poorer areas

The single worst tragedy of the September 19 quake was the collapse of the 14-story Nuevo León building in the low-to-middle income government housing complex at Tlatelolco, the famous site of the 1968 massacre of student protesters by the military. Built in 1963 by the government housing agency FONHAPO, Tlatelolco is the world's most densely populated neighborhood complex. Its 143 buildings hold 100,000 inhabitants, with another 100,000 mobile dwellers living in adjacent areas.

Nearly half of Tlatelolco's buildings are now uninhabitable due to structural damage from the quake, and left thousands homeless, many of whom are camped out in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and adjacent parks. The structural problems at Tlatelolco are nothing new for residents.

In 1980, the National Bank Public Works ordered a Nuevo León building evacuated after a year of problems. It declared the structure unsafe for residents

FONHAPO administration and red tape stalled repairs, and it was only in August that residents won a court case requiring reconstruction of the building's foundations. Work had not yet begun when the September 19 earthquake struck. More than 1,000 people died when the building collapsed.

For several years, Tlatelolco residents have been well organized into tenants' associations, and just two days after the first quake 1,500 angry tenants gathered in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas to denounce "criminal negligence" on the part of the housing agency. Though not as well organized, other tenants' associations in Tlatelolco and across the city have lines in front of the Secretaría de Habitación Social, demanding attention to the needs of the homeless and jobless.

In addition, residents of the Colonias of Morelos, Guerrero, and Valle Gómez, Tlatelolco, and the neighborhood of Tepito were among 3,000 people who marched to the Los Pinos Presidential residence on September 27 demanding emergency aid, water and housing. Little of the emergency aid has arrived in poorer neighborhoods like Tepito, where many have been

crowded housing units known as *vecindades* have collapsed from within.

Among the volunteers working with Tepito residents is artist Felipe Ehrenberg, who said the housing problem is now serious in the neighborhood. "The people fear that if they are offered and accept housing outside the zone, they will not be able to return," said Ehrenberg. "There are families who have lived here 150-200 years. They are asking for reconstruction of the same zone." Tepito residents expressed fear that landlords would use the disaster as a ploy to force them to leave their homes.

Volunteer workers at Tepito's Centro Comunal de Vivienda y Servicios Sociales, a community center, said they had received no government aid. In another neighborhood, noted coordinator Roberto Martínez says, "Some buildings have fallen down, and the local government has not yet provided free labor or material assistance to help rebuild. There will have to be pressure on the owner or owner."

He added, "Are too poor to pay for those repairs."

INSHORT

Beth Maschinot

Invasion, U.K.

Last month Great Britain was the scene of military maneuvers—code-named “Brave Defender”—that were designed to test British defense capability in times of an “international crisis.” Army bases, RAF airfields, radio and TV transmitters were defended by 65,000 troops. Civilian cars were searched between strategic areas designated as “key points” and defending troops faced off with “hostile invaders” on civilian land surrounding military bases. All with unloaded guns, of course—the British government made it clear that in Brave Defender “any disturbance to the public would be kept to a minimum.”

But according to two investigative articles in the British newsweekly *The New Statesman*, Brave Defender was only an ominous inkling of what the British government, in particular the Cabinet’s Home Defense Committee, has slated in case Britain is invaded by Soviet troops or finds itself in the middle of a nuclear attack. If the plainclothed attackers in Brave Defender had been actual Soviet invaders, the first of three Emergency Powers bills would have gone into effect in Britain. The first bill would give the military control over ground defense areas—residential and commercial areas surrounding strategic military and industrial sites. The bill states that residents may be forced to move from the area and homes demolished so that free-fire zones can be set up. Roadblocks may be set up to control the flow of civilians. Protesters or others thought of as “subversive” can be detained without charge or trial by the order of the Home Secretary.

The next step in this escalating war scenario—the implementation of the second Emergency Powers bill—would occur if it is deemed necessary to send the British troops to the European mainland and pump U.S. troops through Britain by air and sea. The second bill extends the authority of the government within the ground defense areas to all of Great Britain. Supplies for the military—including gasoline and food stockpiles—can be requisitioned by the government. Strikes in major industries would be outlawed. Newspapers, radio and TV would be subject to government direction.

The third Emergency Powers bill is especially draconian, and would be implemented only in the case of an “imminent nuclear attack.” At this stage, the government’s powers include the authority to modify the judicial system, to requisition any goods necessary for the U.S. or British military and to force children and adults into labor groups.

According to *New Statesman* reporters Duncan Campbell and Patrick Forbes, these “home defense” tactics have been in the making since 1979 and were approved by the Cabinet’s Home Defense Committee in 1983. In case of war, Parliament (as yet not officially notified of the plans) would have 24 hours to debate and vote on the bills.

Campbell and Forbes also uncovered a related 1983 agreement between Britain and the U.S. that designates Britain as the main staging post for 100,000 U.S. troops who would travel on air and sea routes from North America to continental Europe through Britain. The pact, the U.S.-U.K. Lines of Communication agreement, would allow the U.S. troops to profit from the Emergency Powers laws by receiving civilian supplies, labor help from British civilians and, when wounded, by being given priority in national hospitals for a 60-day period. Though Britain is slated to foot the bills for this U.S. maneuver—which breaks a NATO tenet that “each nation is responsible for continuing support of its forces”—Campbell and Forbes note that the pact has not been reported in the Defense White Papers nor reported to Parliament.

British peace groups were “shocked” by the revelations, according to British attorney and peace leader Gwyn Kirk. She told *In These Times* that peace groups are strategizing in the wake of the uncovered plans, looking for a way to “stop what is an escalating scenario of Britain bowing down before the U.S. to aid American war games.”

Incognito in Colorado

The Colorado Board of Health decided late last month that the state health department must maintain a list of the names and addresses of all those who test positive on the HTLV 3 (“AIDS virus”) test. Both the Colorado chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Colorado AIDS project opposed the board’s unanimous ruling, and fear that at the very least it will

dissuade people from taking the test.

Testing positive on the HTLV 3 doesn’t mean that a person will go on to develop AIDS. In fact, so far tests indicate that only between 5 and 20 percent of people testing positive will be stricken with a full-blown case of AIDS. Another 20 to 30 percent show signs of less severe infection known as AIDS-related complex, or ARC. Though all states require AIDS cases to be reported to the state department of health, Colorado is the first state to require HTLV 3 positives to be reported. But the tracking of this sort of data—of the number of people infected and therefore carriers of the virus—is crucial, according to Fred Wolf, chief of Colorado’s sexually transmitted disease unit. “If our objective is to try and stop transmission, we need to know who’s infected today,” he told the *New York Times*. Stressing the confidentiality of the list, Wolf went on to add that it would only be maintained to facilitate the reporting and surveillance of the disease and to ensure that people who test positive will receive adequate counseling and treatment should they go on to develop AIDS.

But the AIDS Project and the ACLU are not easily comforted by the promise of confidentiality. Given the growing public fear of AIDS and the misplaced talk of quarantines, they are cautioning those worried about how their names might be used to give pseudonyms at the testing sites. That way, the anxious can find out the information they need, the researchers will have

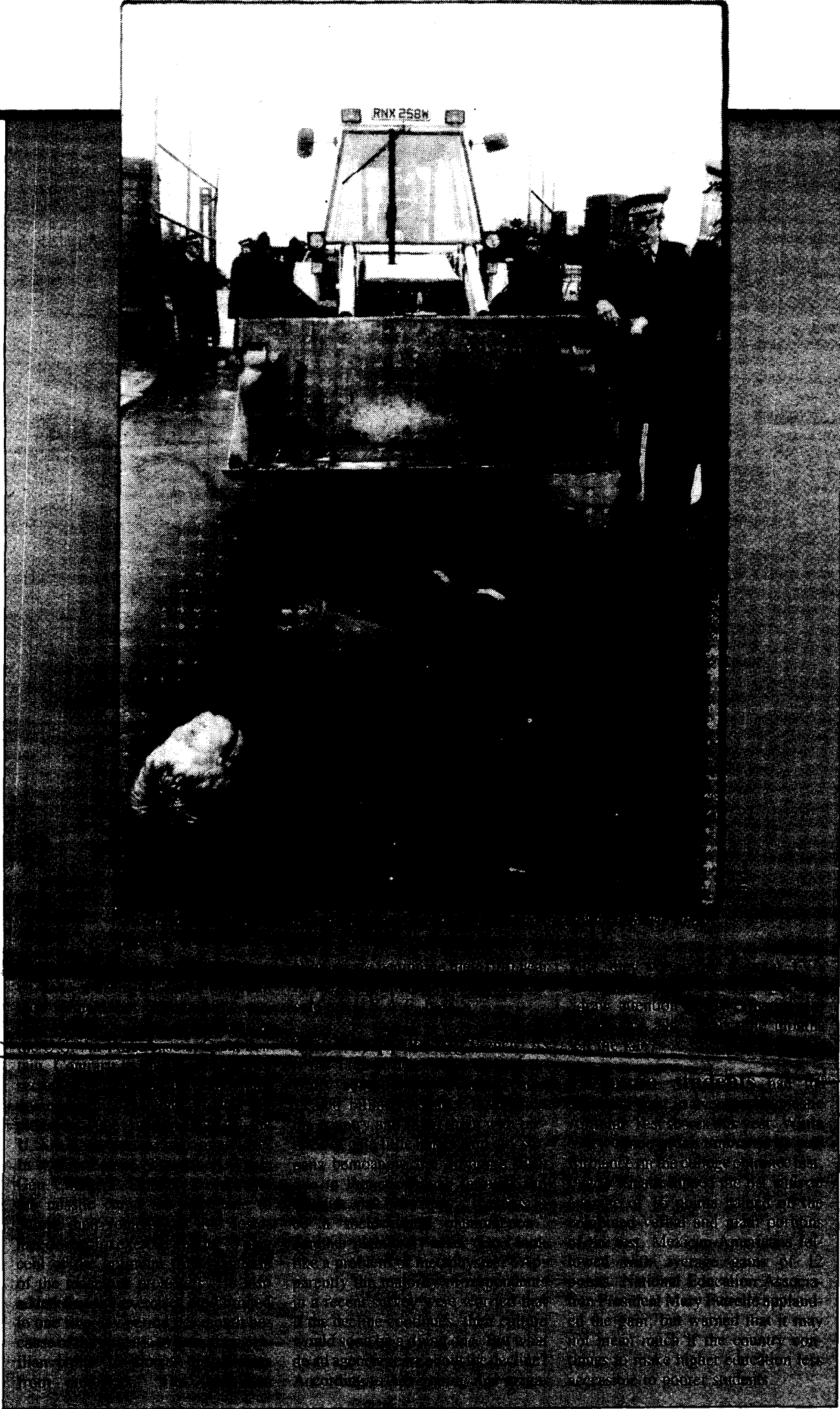
numerical data on the spread of the virus, but the computers will be unable to track down the infected for the purposes of discrimination or quarantine.

Another pretty face

El Salvador’s rightist party, the National Republican Alliance, is hellbent on sprucing up its “death squad” image. Last week its virulent spokesman and president, Roberto D’Aubuisson, stepped down in order to let a more soft-spoken and diplomatic politico, Alfredo Cristiani, take the helm.

Repeated rumors of D’Aubuisson’s connections to death squad activities, including the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980, has taken its toll on D’Aubuisson’s effectiveness as a party figurehead. D’Aubuisson will not be content to rest, though, before he’s “saved El Salvador from communism.” He intends to take an elder statesman role in the party, heading a new political institute to train Salvadorans in “political warfare.”

Cristiani, the new head of the party, is a 37-year-old coffee producer who studied business administration at Georgetown University. He has headed various associations of coffee and cotton growers in El Salvador, and lost some of his large landholdings to the agrarian redistribution program in the early ’80s.



AS COMPARABLE WORTH ADVOCATES survey the damage from last month's federal appeals panel decision overturning AFSCME's 1983 victory against the state of Washington, two developments in California indicate the setback hasn't changed the political terrain for those who back pay equity as a way to narrow the wage gap between men and women.

Some legal analysts were predicting AFSCME's reversal could doom future comparable worth litigation, but a federal judge here gave the go-ahead for a sex-based wage discrimination case against the state. Brought by the California State Employees Association (CSEA), an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Federal District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel ruled that the AFSCME decision didn't "foreclose" legal efforts to prove "intentional" discrimination against women workers has resulted in paying them less money than men in comparable positions.

Labor attorneys say the ruling dispelled some of the legal gloom the 9th Circuit AFSCME decision cast over pay equity suits. "All the court of appeals said is that the facts as they find them didn't show that wage disparities resulted from discrimination," says attorney Winn Newman, who is handling both the AFSCME and the CSEA cases. "Judge Patel said SEIU has the right to show disparities [in California] did result from discrimination—that they've made 'sufficient allegations' to enable them to try."

Meanwhile, AFSCME's loss caused pay equity advocates to advise relying more on local and state governments to close the wage gap between the sexes. But the difficulties of that strategy were evident in San Francisco, where Mayor Dianne Feinstein has proposed a ballot measure repealing a comparable worth agreement between the Board of Supervisors and the SEIU (see sidebar).

The practical effect of Feinstein's Proposition E is uncertain, since initiatives can't void labor contracts. But the political impact of its likely passage is so troubling that some of its opponents—imagining "Voters nix comparable worth" headlines—have argued against dignifying the measure by campaigning against it.

The California cases prove that after the AFSCME decision, which the union has appealed to the full court, comparable worth backers can neither rule out the courts nor count on success in political channels. But all three cases show that comparable worth has become a highly charged political issue since Federal District Judge Jack Tanner's AFSCME ruling two years ago. Now that decision seems almost as avant-garde as the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision was in the abortion realm—both decisions advanced the goals of the women's rights movement, but also served to galvanize its opponents.

"Men's work is worth more"

CSEA's lawsuit followed three years of wrangling with state officials over how to implement a comparable worth plan. Back in 1981, a state statute mandated that employees' salaries be set on the basis of "comparability" of work, comparing skill, effort and working conditions. In subsequent annual reports to the legislature, state researchers concluded that female-dominated job classifications were "undervalued" compared with male-dominated sectors, and that the disparity couldn't be explained by anything but the concept that "men's work is worth more."

Last year the state legislature passed a bill appropriating \$77 million to begin boosting wages in those female-dominated sectors, but Gov. George Deukmejian vetoed it. CSEA followed his veto with its lawsuit. (This year the legislature again appropriated comparable worth funds, and Deukmejian again vetoed them.)

In giving CSEA a green light for its suit, Patel used the AFSCME decision to urge the union to pay special attention to

CALIFORNIA

Comparable worth advocates optimistic



San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein is against spending money to achieve pay equity.

proving that "intentional" discrimination caused the wage disparities. If the AFSCME reversal has any impact it will be better to define the terms of debate over what constitutes "intentional" discrimination.

Judge Tanner's 1983 decision found "overwhelming" evidence that "intentional, pervasive" discrimination had caused jobs held mostly by women to be paid an average of 20 percent less than jobs held by men (see *In These Times*, Sept. 16,

1983). Backed by a 1981 9th Circuit ruling that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act outlawed sex-based wage discrimination even in non-identical jobs, Tanner ordered a \$400 million back pay award to 15,500 Washington state employees.

But last month the appeals panel found that when the state deliberately set wages in female-dominated job classifications below rates paid for comparable jobs done by men—which the state acknowledged—it wasn't practicing sex discrimination but

IN THESE TIMES OCT. 9-15, 1985 5 following the dictates of the labor market. "The state did not create the market disparity," the panel found. "Neither law nor logic deems the free market a suspect enterprise."

In petitioning the full court for a rehearing, AFSCME attorneys argue that the original trial never examined whether Washington's wage scales actually matched the market's. "One question is, do you consider the market a legal defense," says Newman. "We don't. Judge Tanner considered it a pretext. But assuming it is, then the state has to present evidence to show it followed the market. We think the evidence shows they ignored the market."

In the CSEA lawsuit, "We intend to show that the state did not rely on the market," says Pat Campbell, a CSEA attorney. She declined to outline the union's evidence to that end, since the case is still in discovery, but predicts that "interesting developments" in the market-based defense will come out of the suit. Newman points out that Patel's recent ruling stresses that Title VII prohibits sex-based wage discrimination "even though wage rates may have had their antecedents in market rates."

Ideological echo

Yet the 9th Circuit's emphasis on market sanctity is a courtroom echo of the right's ideological struggle against comparable worth that began with Tanner's 1983 decision in AFSCME's favor. From the White House through the Justice Department to the Civil Rights Commission, slowing pay equity's political momentum has become an agenda-topping priority. "The courts respond to the political climate," notes comparable worth expert Judith Kurtz, an attorney with San Francisco-based Equal Rights Advocates.

Attorneys doing comparable worth litigation have to fight the notion "that this is a wild new concept," notes Pat Campbell. "It's based on solid management principles that have always guided determining the worth of jobs." Scales comparing jobs by their skill, background and safety requirements have been used to get around wage freezes imposed during wartime, Campbell notes—and later allowed some companies to dodge equal pay complaints.

Many labor and feminist attorneys try to avoid the comparable worth label altogether. "We're not bringing a comparable worth case—we're charging intentional, illegal discrimination against women," Campbell says. "It's called sex-based wage discrimination, and it's not a matter of a new legal theory."

Feinstein and Proposition E

The politics of San Francisco's Proposition E are tangled, but Mayor Feinstein's position can be stated quite simply: she's not against pay equity, she just opposes spending money to achieve it.

The city's comparable worth controversy began early this year, when a supervisors' committee studying the question began looking at ways to raise the wages of mainly female and minority workers clustered in low-paying city jobs. Since a city charter provision requiring salaries to be set by "prevailing wage" surveys seemed to rule out blanket increases for the affected groups, the supervisors looked at a plan proposed by the Civil Service Commission—give a meal allowance of \$2 a day to those workers.

But the legality of that "meal allowance" was questionable, so the supervisors' ordinance provided for setting aside an \$8.8 million pay equity fund in the event the meal subsidy proved impossible, which it did. In contract negotiations with the city, SEIU managed to get the \$8.8 million fund—and another \$19 million next year—recognized in a memorandum of understanding between the union and the supervisors, providing that the fund would be spent when a legal way to boost the

wages of underpaid women and minorities could be established.

Feinstein vetoed both the comparable worth salary ordinance and the supervisors' memo of understanding, but both vetoes were overridden—the first overrides of Feinstein's administration. So the mayor turned to the ballot, with a proposition designed to repeal "a meal allowance or any other premium payment" to city workers.

The problem is, even the city attorney agrees that the ordinance violated the agreement between SEIU and the city. Now Feinstein has fallen back on calling Proposition E a "poison" measure designed to express voter disapproval of the "meal allowance" fund. Though the measure's practical impact will be negligible, Feinstein is pushing it hard.

In recent weeks she's begun to blame the city's impending defeat on comparable worth, and has threatened to make up the \$28 million the plan will cost over two years by laying off city employees. The city's own budget analyst has refuted Feinstein's excuse for San Francisco's fiscal plight, blaming it instead on the mayor's spending and hiring spree inspired by the last several years' surpluses.

If the practical effects of Proposition

E are minimal, opponents worry about the potential impact of passage. "We're concerned about how this is read nationally," said attorney Judith Kurtz of San Francisco-based Equal Rights Advocates. The union-baiting theme of Feinstein's arguments for Proposition E puts SEIU members against the measure—a disturbing strategy, says a union leader in a so-called "leak" column. Adds Equal Rights Advocate Gail Kathan: "SEIU has decided to put money behind the campaign to defeat the measure, wanting to minimize its public impact."

Proposition E has also gained traction in the city's feminist community. The National Women's Political Caucus has come under pressure from the National Pay Equity for Women's Campaign to endorse Feinstein's home-front effort. At the same time, no resolution has been reached on the issue.

Yet a backlash of fear and anger among city employees may backfire on the mayor's commitment to comparable worth. She proposed a \$2 million increase for the wages of some underpaid workers. While much smaller than the original proposal, Feinstein's plan has one flaw in one crucial way—it calls for a plan to raise some wages without any market guidelines by simply matching some jobs within the city's "pay charts" set by the city's last wage survey. Concludes Gail Kathan: "The mayor's plan is a political trap."



Der Spiegel

Mexico

Continued from page 3
within a week of the tremors life had returned to normal for most people.
Why the downtown area? And the key question for most: why had hotels, hospitals, schools and apartment buildings been the most vulnerable structures?
These public buildings were alike in that they had large spaces such as lobbies on the first floor and small cubicle rooms—requiring much material for walls, bathrooms, etc.—above. According to University of Mexico Engineering Professor Emilio Rosenbleuth, when the earth started

moving, the “honeycomb effect” of numerous floors with small rooms moving over the open space below contributed to the structures’ collapse. Many were also newer buildings built with cheaper materials.
At first the ground’s initial movement was “trepidatory,” or up and down. Then it was horizontal, oscillating from side to side. The first movement proved most damaging, according to experts, as the buildings moved in resonance with the ground and shook loose from their foundations.
The downtown area proved most vulnerable due to the history of Mexico itself: the city’s center arose on top of what was a large lake dotted by islands in Aztec times. After the 1521 conquest, landfill spread

Over 15,000 were injured in the quakes.

over the soft lakebed soil that consists primarily of sand and volcanic ash.
Hence during the tremors, which measured 8.1 and 7.5 on the Richter scale, this unfirm ground “shook like a bowl of jelly,” according to Rosenbleuth. Outlying areas resting on stronger bedrock escaped largely unscathed.
The debt won’t go away
As the city struggled to dig out, the earthquakes had an international impact as well. Attention centered on Mexico’s staggering \$90 billion foreign debt, and its attempts to reach agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on new credits for repaying the debt.
Reaction was swift to the IMF’s untimely announcement the very day of the first quake that it was suspending a loan because Mexico would not adopt austerity measures. But the international lending institution quickly took a more conciliatory stance after realizing the extent of damages. The debt did not go away, however.
“A disaster had to occur to show the world that the conditions demanded for the debt payment are unjust,” editorialized *Excelsior*. Some even called for complete suspension of the country’s \$12 million annual interest payments—more than 50 percent of Mexico’s export earnings—so that the money could be redirected to reconstruction.
As the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank offered loans at favorable interest rates, a column in the newspaper *La Jornada* responded: “How can we repay those new loans? How can we increase the debt still more, as the city faces the need to decentralize, to create emergency jobs, to conduct the most ambitious housing program in the country’s history?”
The Mexican situation became the major reference point for many of the leaders who spoke passionately about the overall debt crisis before the United Nations General Assembly two weeks ago. Peru’s Alan Garcia, Brazil’s José Sarney and Spain’s Felipe

Gonzalez all had visited Mexico en route to New York.
The story in *La Jornada* also touched on another key issue resulting from the catastrophe: Miguel de la Madrid’s attempts to decentralize the massive metropolis and shake down the government bureaucracy. The quakes will serve as a catalyst for the decentralization drive, which calls for moving offices and ministries to other areas.
Last year the Institute for Agrarian Studies moved to Cuernavaca, located south of Mexico City. Its 300 workers either had to relocate or face dismissal, as will now be the case with the Ministries of Highways and Bridges, Fishing and Agrarian Reform, according to officials.
“Decentralization will help decongest the city, as well as stimulate the economy, contribute to a more just distribution of the wealth and create more equilibrium between regions,” said Senator Celso Humberto Delgado.
While recognizing the need to decentralize, doubts persist among those who are being forced to relocate, according to Gustavo Carranza, an official with the Union of Agriculture and Hydraulic Works.
“People do not want to move without clear guarantees of having services such as new housing and schools available,” Carranza said. “In the past workers forced to move have discovered promises were not kept.”
To date, the occupants of what some estimate to be the most populated city in the world—approximately 17 million inhabitants—are still recovering from the high human toll resulting from the quakes. Mild tremors could still be felt 10 days after the first jolt, adding to the already enormous strain on the residents.
With time, the immediate wounds will heal. Time will also reveal the full impact on the political, economic and social spheres. And only time can reveal whether, as the *Excelsior* editorial queried, this “Leviathan” will look in the mirror and decide to change some of its more excessive ways.

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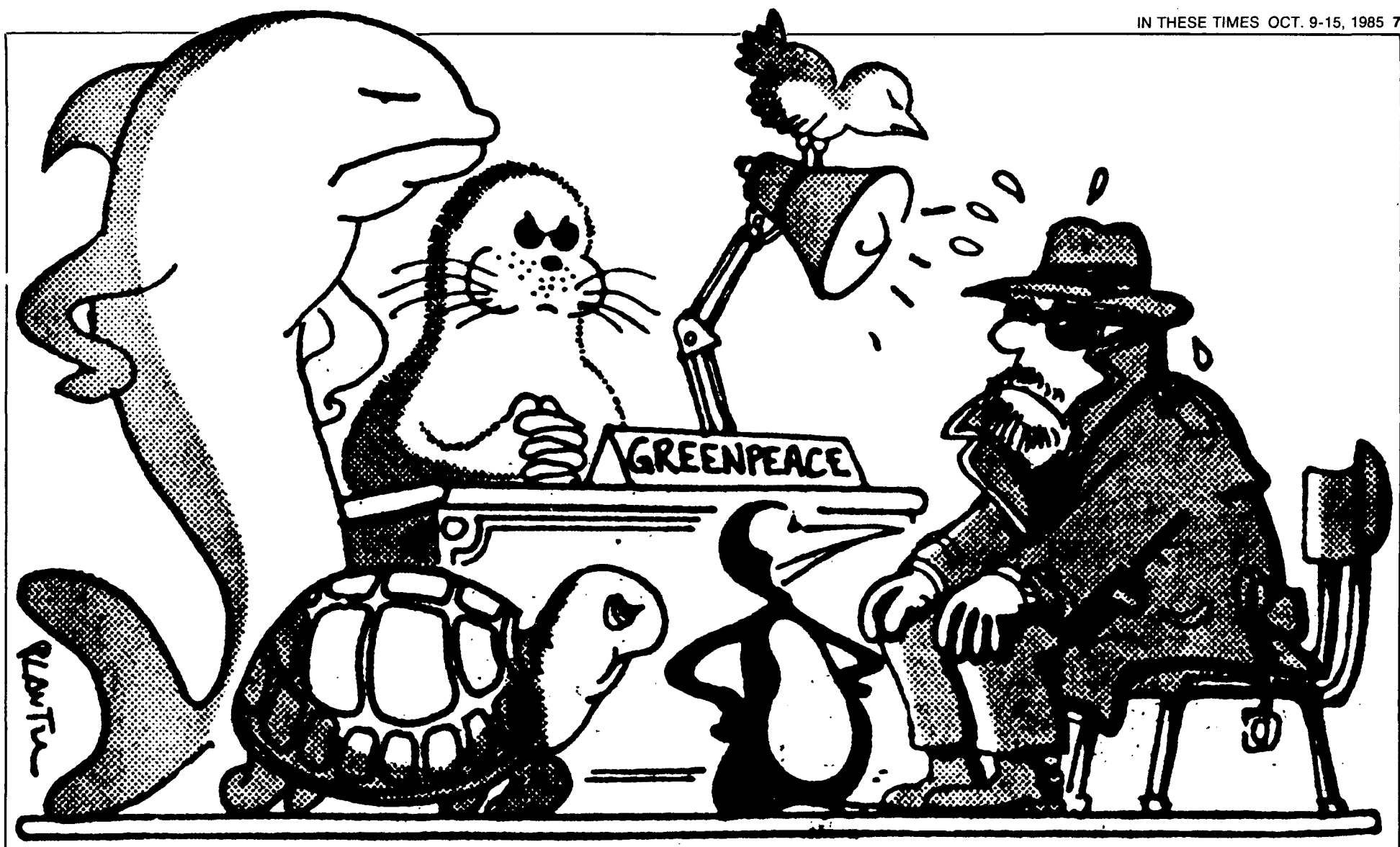
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By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

THE RAINBOW WARRIOR IS SINKING Francois Mitterrand, and with him the Socialist Party and what remains of the French left. This is so despite the fact that the right-wing opposition by no means disapproves of sinking the Greenpeace flagship in Auckland, New Zealand, and that the national consensus behind the nuclear policy that dictated the crime has never been stronger.

It is above all the way Mitterrand has handled the scandal as the facts came out that is doing him in. The "tranquil force" was his chosen image, and he liked to say that this time, with a seven-year presidency, the left had time to get things done. But time is running out. Next spring the left is expected to lose parliamentary elections, and pressure will be on Mitterrand to resign rather than to fill out the last two years of his term with a hostile parliament.

Mitterrand's ploy to stay on was to move toward the center with Prime Minister Laurent Fabius and to base "cohabitation" with the right on a split between domestic and foreign affairs. Domestic affairs could be left to a conservative parliament and cabinet, while the president would retain control of his special constitutional domain, foreign and military affairs—a domain in which Mitterrand could rightly claim that his policies enjoy a national consensus.

The policy consensus is undamaged. Everybody loves nuclear deterrence. It is Mitterrand's capacity to manage this popular policy that has lost credibility. Instead of tranquility and strength, the qualities that have come across during the Greenpeace unraveling are procrastination and duplicity.

Press and politicians—even Socialist Party Secretary Lionel Jospin—complained that Mitterrand was "too slow" in dealing with the scandal. Since last July, when New Zealand arrested two agents of the French intelligence agency, the DGSE, it was clear that French responsibility for the explosions that sank the *Rainbow Warrior* and killed photographer Fernando Pereira was going to come out.

According to *Le Figaro*, Fabius immediately proposed a scenario supported by the military. Defense Minister Charles Hernu would take responsibility for an operation that went awry (neither Pereira's death nor getting caught was part of the plan) and resign, France would pay compensation to Pereira's family and discreetly negotiate the release of its agents. But the

FRANCE

Mitterrand sunk by Rainbow Warrior

"tranquil force" balked.

Certainly Mitterrand did not want to sacrifice Hernu, an old friend and, moreover, as the cabinet minister most popular with the right and the military, the key to Mitterrand's "cohabitation" with a victorious right next year. Instead, he decided to deny everything and let time bury the affair.

But a time bomb was ticking in New Zealand. The French agents are to be brought to trial, evidence is to be presented. Apparently what happened is that Fabius and Interior Minister Pierre Joxe urged Mitterrand to sacrifice Hernu, and when he kept stalling they gave *Le Monde* enough information to force the issue. Thus *Le Monde* came out with its famous September 18 issue announcing that the *Rainbow Warrior* "may have" been sunk by French frogmen acting under orders of top military officers and Defense Minister Hernu. This succeeded in dislodging Hernu who, still denying everything, resigned on September 20, along with the DGSE chief, Admiral Pierre Lacoste. Two days later Fabius made a surprise appearance on television alongside his new defense minister, Paul Quilès, to announce their "discovery" that the *Rainbow Warrior* had been sunk by DGSE agents acting "on orders."

Lingering questions

Suspense. Whose orders? Mitterrand was sending open letters to his prime minister saying he "wanted to know" whether what he read in the papers was true. On another television show, Fabius said he had questioned Lacoste and Hernu and acquired the "conviction" that they had given the orders. But he stressed that "in a democracy such as ours" the civilian authority—that is Hernu—bore the political responsibility. It was necessary to stress this point to calm the mounting wrath of the military at rumors (circulating especially among Mitterrand's defenders) that right-wing officers had carried out the operation without authorization of the Socialist government and even to embarrass it.

But if that were the case, wouldn't Mitterrand have cracked down angrily upon

learning what was done behind his back? Instead, he spent the summer emphasizing French determination to continue nuclear testing in the Pacific and fend off Greenpeace protesters.

It has to be admitted that the right is now offering a more plausible explanation for Mitterrand's procrastination than his supporters. "In defense matters, the president of the Republic has been torn between the imperatives of nuclear armament and concern not to offend socialist and ecologist militants to whom he promised a freeze and then destruction of the nuclear deterrent force," wrote Jean Foyer in *Figaro*. The French navy had the sense to keep the Greenpeace fleet from approaching Mururoa, but the Socialist government "preferred the Auckland coup," which was "just right

The right is now offering a better explanation for Mitterrand's procrastination than his supporters.

for Mitterrand. Unfortunately for him, it was clumsily executed. At that point, the only dignified course would have been to take public responsibility, explain Greenpeace's machinations and say that France had preferred to sink an empty ship rather than take the risk of sending it to the bottom with crew and passengers. Deep down inside, three-quarters of Socialists would have approved. But what would the militants have said? So it was decided to tell tales.

The top-most opposition leaders with presidential ambitions—Raymond Barre, Jacques Chirac and ex-President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing—are keeping a statesmanlike silence on the affair and stressing devotion to French nuclear testing against the

enemy ecologists. Their line on the matter has been expressed by Jean Lecanuet, who said the Socialist government had preferred sabotage because they didn't want to have to "expel" the ecologists from Mururoa "with the necessary vigor."

As chairman of the Senate defense and foreign affairs commission, Lecanuet is expressing mild curiosity as to who gave the order to release money from the prime minister's special funds to pay for the caper. But only mild, because although the line of command leads directly to the top (which could further embarrass Mitterrand and Fabius), it leads there by way of General Jean Michel Saulnier, who as Mitterrand's top military aide signed the release of funds for the Auckland operation. As chairman of the joint chiefs of staff since August 1 and a former commander of France's strategic air forces (Mirage nuclear bombers and missiles stationed in southeastern France), Gen. Saulnier is certainly an untouchable, for the right even more than for the left.

As number-one champion of French nuclear forces, Gen. Saulnier no doubt played a leading role in impressing Mitterrand with the anger of personnel at the Pacific nuclear test center over forthcoming Greenpeace protests and with the need to do something to stop them. But this gets into the realm of defense secrets, which in France is protected by a law providing 10 to 20 years in prison for divulging information.

There has been no real newspaper crusade to uncover the truth. Allusions to the Watergate myth are just so much hype. *Figaro's* specialist on anti-Communism Annie Kriegel was not wrong when she wrote: "Why speak of investigative journalism...when journalists accredited to and chosen by a public administration...receive from it a complete authenticated file? It's the same with deliberately organized leaks. The only margin of freedom is that of the editor in chief who does or does not give the green light for publication...." In reality, "investigative journalism" aimed at the secretive French administration is scarcely possible. The initiative for diverse revelations, true or false, is taken from the inside by officials with an axe to grind.

Le Monde at the helm

There is no guarantee that the *Le Monde* operation that dislodged Hernu produced "the truth." What it produced was a version of the facts judged by government sources like Pierre Joxe and *Le Monde's* editors to be both more plausible and more useful—for aiding the two agents imprisoned in

Continued on page 15

Appalshop arts center provides an impassioned and eloquent defense of a region

By Pat Aufderheide

“I THINK WE’RE JUST TRYING TO LET people see us the way we see ourselves,” says Herb E. Smith, one of the founders of a remarkable arts center called Appalshop, nestled in the Kentucky hills. With a 15-year retrospective of Appalshop’s films now available for showing at arts centers across the nation, after its debut last winter at Washington, D.C.’s American Film Institute, and with a National Endowment for the Humanities challenge grant opening up new production possibilities, Appalshop has moved into a national spotlight. But there’s no danger of Appalshop’s losing its regional focus.

Appalshop is an unsentimental exercise in authenticity, in fierce defense of a regional culture most commonly portrayed in this country’s media in images familiar from “The Beverly Hillbillies” and *Li’l Abner*. In films, books, photographic exhibits, records, plays and TV shows, Appalshop testifies that local lifestyles can survive in silicon-chipped mass culture, and more.

It suggests that there’s another way to measure the quality of life in the U.S. today: not in terms of how many items from K-Mart you can cram into a kitchen, but in terms of your ability to express yourself in your own language and to live a life in which work and play, family and neighborhood, creation and recreation are part of the same experience.

It didn’t start out that way. Back in 1969, when the federal government had singled out Appalachia for poverty-program focus, Whitesburg, Ky., became the site of a community film workshop, to prepare young people for the modern world. Dee Davis, Smith and other high school students were idling away a summer before leaving town, and began playing with the machinery.

“What we grew up knowing,” recalls Davis, now a film producer, “was that everyone left Appalachia. My parents often mourned that our ‘best and brightest’ left as soon as they could. When Appalshop started, it was clearly to train people to get jobs when they left. When we came in, it became a project to keep people there.”

A hidden America

One early project became a hilarious little film about an annual coon-on-a-leg contest. (The object is for your dog to get a coon off a log in the river quicker than anybody else’s dog.) Other projects and grants followed, and now Appalshop is an entrenched part of the community. Its offices house not only film production facilities but a performance center where dance classes and plays are held. On a \$900,000 budget the producers also maintain a record company and run a TV show. And now they are talking about sponsoring a public radio station.

Some of their endeavors even make money. And they’re proud of festival awards

for their films, including one in Portugal last year. These honors are given for films that reveal little-known cultures, and they usually go to Third World filmmakers. Appalshop producers aren’t surprised they got it; they have long known that Appalachia is a hidden America to most of us.

Their most important measure of success, though, comes from the folks back home. “We’re not the 60 Minutes of Appalachia,” Smith says. “We need to make films about people we respect and admire, and to reach people here with the positive side of their culture as well as with issues that affect them.” Appalshop’s films use a style that reflects that aim. They rarely use narration, and the camera unobtrusively travels with its subject. The subject is often the kind of person who stubbornly owns his own life, and whose life story illuminates larger realities.

In *Waterground*, the owner of a family flour mill talks about the history of the enterprise, its decline with the rise of corporate mills and the way his business has revived with the national fascination for health food. In *Nature’s Way*, an aged farm woman gathers herbs in the forest for her cure-all home remedy, while remarking that she’s never been in a hospital except to visit somebody. When her concoction catches fire on the stove, the filmmakers stay with her, letting us see both the mistake and how she copes with it.

For all their respect for nearly-forgotten folkways, these media producers are not on a nostalgia trip, nor are they folklorists on an archiving mission. “We can’t preserve culture,” explains Davis. “It’s bigger than we are.” They see their work as part of a wider movement for social justice. For instance, the film *In the Good Old-Fashioned Way*, about a Baptist sect popular among older people in Appalachia, carried a message beyond the one its subjects were preaching. “We were in the South there with Vietnam,” Smith recalls. “We had been taught, ‘Go out and do factory work, join the machine that’s sending people to Vietnam. Join the consumer society. Forget what people have learned here.’ We felt a real sense of hope for America that the Old Regular Baptist Church even existed.”

When a mini-boom hit Appalachia in 1974—the oil price hike had triggered a strip-mining boom in coal—the Appalshop producers began to focus on topical concerns. “I think that until those \$20 bills started floating around, people could believe we were still a haven—living outside the military-industrial complex. We came to see that wasn’t true,” says Smith.

Then a coal company’s dam collapsed, flooding an entire town and killing more than a hundred people. *The Buffalo Creek Flood*, made by Mimi Pickering, is an hour-long exploration of the disaster made with insiders’ sensitivity and dextrous professionalism. Stories of eyewitnesses—people who watched neighbors be swept away to certain death—and the bland denials of corporate responsibility by officials provide gruesome contrast.

Several years later, Pickering and others returned to the disaster area. The resulting film, *Buffalo Creek Revisited*, shows that the flood only began the catastrophe. A government reconstruction project had left the locals out of the planning, and had sabotaged the remaining social relations. An impersonal rural slum grew up; the flood had killed not just people but a community.

The stereotyping disease

If communities can be crippled by disaster, they can also be scarred by disease. And that’s how Appalshop people see the

pervasive stereotyping of Appalachian hill life. In *Strangers and Kin*, its ambitious and engaging feature documentary, two centuries of put-downs and misunderstandings are brought to life in caricature by a witty team of actor-storytellers. Along with quotations (in costume) from historical documents and clips from films like *Deliverance*, the film

explains the roots of the stereotype in Appalachia’s development as a frontier society, a Civil War front, and a mining region.

The film ends with scenes from a recent “Hillbilly Days” festival. Locals pose as their stereotypes, carting jugs of pseudo-moonshine and snapping their suspenders. The film thus ends with a caution that those



Local artisan Chester Cornett appears in *Hand Carved*, an Appalshop film.

onal culture commonly portrayed in America's media through "hillbilly" images.

who buy somebody else's myth can lose their own history. Among the film's supporters is Ned Beatty, one of the stars of *Deliverance*, who attended the film's premiere in Kentucky.

The Appalshop schedule barely leaves time to dwell on invidious caricatures of hill lifestyle. Their projects draw on the talents and resources of the region to foster

awareness of the riches others may not see. The recent *Sunny Side of Life* is a happy example. It features members of the singing Carter family who stayed home and never plugged in their instruments. Along with lively concert footage from Janette Carter's music hall, the film takes a close look at the trials and rewards of promoting down-home entertainment at the grassroots.

Appalshop's own record label, June Appal, also records local musicians.

National-local links

In an original play written by Appalshop's Roadside Theater, storytelling traditions are employed to revive the region's history. *Red Fox: Second Hangin'* reveals the tale behind the hanging of a celebrated folk hero,

Doc "Red Fox" Taylor. His execution followed that of a local troublemaker. Both had been implicated in murders resulting from a feud that began during the Civil War. The hangings kicked off a law-and-order campaign that Northern coal company executives considered essential to expanding their operations at the turn of the century.

On stage, three storytellers recount this tale, adopting different voices and personas, and weaving economic and political tensions into a family saga. Frequently during a performance members of the audience will join in to correct or to amplify the version. Intensely local, the play has universal implications—and appeal. It has traveled the country to enthusiastic receptions, and Appalshop also filmed it in a version now available for home video.

The center's TV show, "Headwaters"—until recently on an NBC affiliate and on cable, and now on public TV—often has a uniquely local focus. One of the most-demanded programs is *In the Old Fashioned Way*. A lay preacher shown in the film has since died, but his reputation lives on and people often say when asking for it, "It sure would be nice to see ol' Frank again."

National issues are linked to concerns at home. In a broadcast of the State of the Union Address, for instance, the President's remarks were intercut with commentary by local miners. "Headwaters" producer Anne Johnson says that show met her goal: "to allow the many people who are never heard at all to talk, and to be understood for what they say."

In the TV program's workshops on current issues, frank interchanges can bring expert discussion down to earth. When challenging a corporate official's claim that acid rain in the region was not the coal company's responsibility, one woman asked, "If there's a cow in your backyard, whose manure is it?"

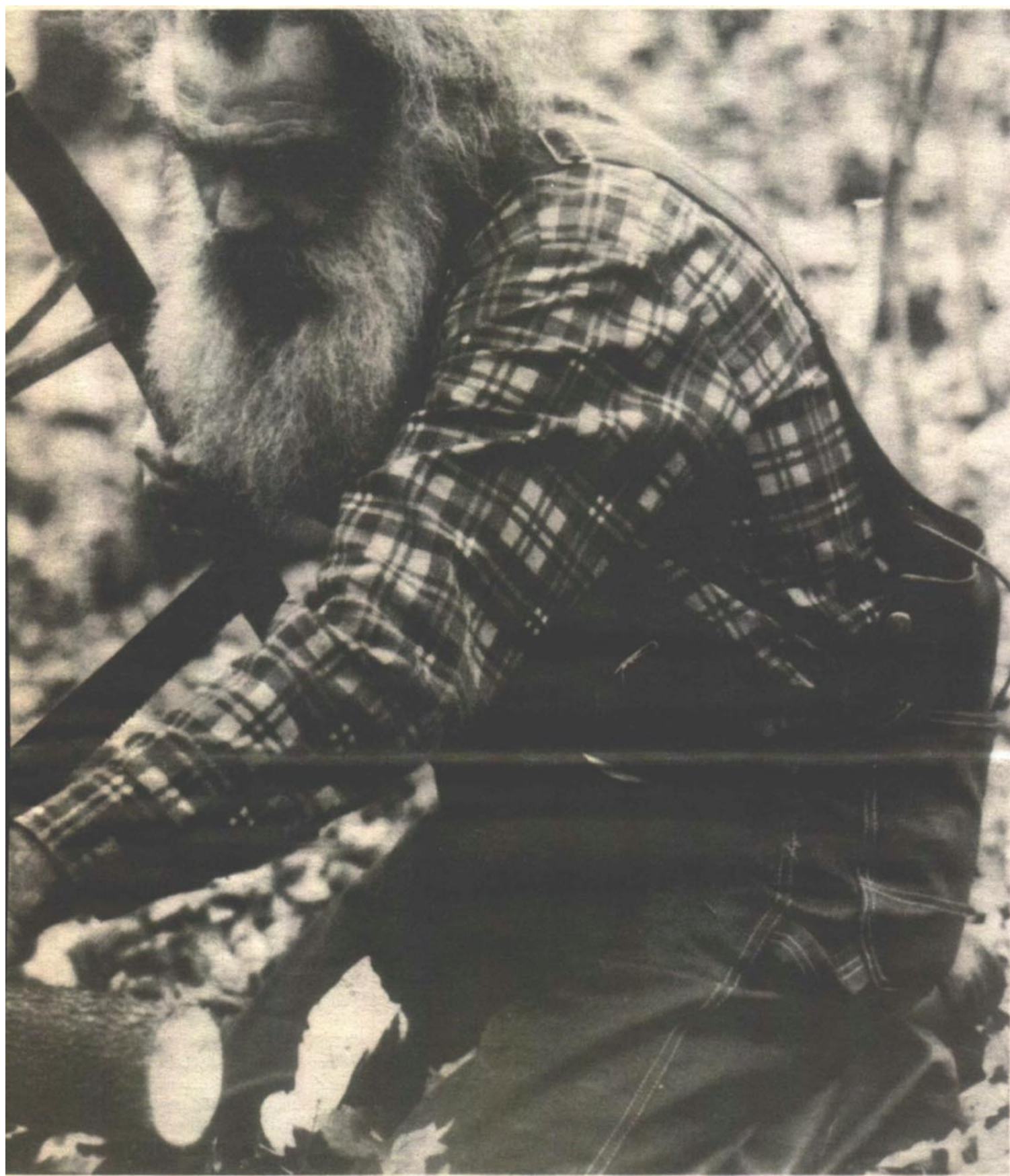
Appalshop producers work with the conviction that folk culture, however unpretentious, is not unsophisticated. Increasingly the group has moved past a simple celebration of folkways, into provocative self-examination. Take a recent film, *Lord and Father*, made by the son of a prosperous local tobacco farmer.

It begins with a respectful view of the farmer describing a bucolic operation, in which he loves the land and his tenant farmers love him. As the film proceeds, his son asks hard questions: Is tobacco a good crop to raise, since cigarettes kill people? Is merely giving tenant farmers a place to live enough to pay them for a lifetime of work? Interviews with the tenants—one of whom dies of lung cancer in the course of filmmaking—expose other tensions of a patriarchal, even feudal relationship. Finally, the farmer tells his son he doesn't care about finding answers for the hard questions. He'll die soon, and the kids will have to grapple with them.

That's the challenge that Appalshop faces, along with the generation it represents. The past is a resource for the present but each generation must create its own future. Appalshop intends to be part of that process. As Herb E. Smith says, "What we're most proud of is that we have had a little to do with people here maintaining their own community—those mutual aid and support systems that let us survive in hard times."

Appalshop's address: P.O. Box 743A, Whitesburg, KY 41858, (606) 633-0108.

Parts of this article originally appeared in *New Age* magazine.



YTH

III

LETTERS

No monopoly

IT'S GOOD TO SEE *ITT* FINALLY GIVING REGULAR coverage—via your "Technotrends" column—to the computer revolution. It's not as crazy about time. But let's hope future columns in this series are better informed than your initial one (*ITT*, Sept. 18).

Contrary to what you printed, standardization remains a formidable problem for the computer industry. It's not as crazy as it was a few years ago, but interfacing machines from different manufacturers—and even those from within the IBM family—can be extremely difficult.

True "plug compatability" with computer equipment, comparable to what we now have with stereo systems, will probably come some day—and perhaps largely due to the influence of IBM. But we're a long way from that situation.

Your columnist's view of IBM as a "monopoly" in the computer industry is also misleading. It's true the company controls about 80 percent of the top-dollar main-frame market. But in the newer—and faster-growing—mini-computer and micro-computer markets, IBM gets about one-third of the sales.

Right now, the micro-computer segment of the industry is less than 10 years old. It has matured a bit, but it is still young, turbulent and highly innovative. Every week, trade publications are filled with reports of new products coming on the market. Many are for use with IBM equipment, but many others are not. IBM plays a key role in the industry, but it is certainly not one of monopolistic dominance.

Rather than worrying about who's on top in the computer industry, I would hope the future "Technotrends" pieces deal with the social implications of this fast-growing technology.

John Magney
Menominee, Mich.

Second language

A SMALL CORRECTION TO POLLY HOWELL's fine article on Soviet Jewish emigrés (*ITT*, Sept. 11). The "teenager from Kiev" who complained about the poetry of the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko must have learned Ukrainian as a second language or studied the poetry in Russian translation.

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

In Russian the word *zhid* means kike; in Ukrainian, a language not so rich in vituperation, it simply means Jew. The only other word for Jew in Ukrainian is *Yevrey*—literally, "Hebrew"—which is considered a pretentious usage.

This is not to say Shevchenko did not portray Jews in an unfavorable light; he did. However, he is hardly unique in that. Have you read *The Merchant of Venice* lately?

If Jews think they are being insulted every time a Ukrainian says "Jew," then the bad blood between these groups is not surprising!

T.V. Wolansky
Kerhonkson, N.Y.

Racist Zionists?

IN POLLY HOWELL'S ARTICLE ON EMIGRANT Jews from the Soviet Union (*ITT*, Sept. 11), the author expresses surprise that so many emigrants are prejudiced against blacks. The author concludes that this reflects a failing in the Soviet system itself to educate its citizens in racial tolerance or acceptance of all ethnic groups. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Remember that most Jewish emigrants are Zionists. The prejudice of these Jews merely highlights the problem that the Soviet Union has with these Jews. Zionism teaches that Jews are superior to all non-Jews. Blacks occupy the lowest position, therefore, among all the races, according to Zionist racial philosophy.

This racist attitude on the part of Zionists is exactly why the Soviets have a problem with Zionist Jews. Zionist Jews believe they are superior to Uzbeks, Byelorussians, Moldavians, and the Russian nationality itself! They believe they are superior to all the nationalities of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has no room for a people trying to stir up national hatred under the cloak of religion.

Zionism is political, not religious, having nothing at all to do with traditional Judaism, which believes in the brotherhood and sisterhood of all humanity. Zionism is in violation of the Soviet con-

stitution, a provision of which forbids any kind of racism, or national chauvinism. The U.S. lets these Zionist Jews into this country and makes the Soviet problem our problem.

Now, I know that if you print this, you'll receive dozens of letters, saying I'm anti-Semitic, even though I emphasize that Judaism, as opposed to Zionism, believes in universal equality and love of humanity.

Ernest Field
Cleveland

Misleading

POLLY HOWELL'S ARTICLE ON SOVIET Jews in America (*ITT*, Sept. 11), principally concerned with making a misleading case against the Soviet Union. For instance:

1. Howell writes that "during and immediately after the revolution" Jews held important Party positions. Her next sentence reads: "Today Jews have their national identity stamped in their internal passports." She could have added that today Jews still occupy important positions in the Party, being statistically over-represented in the CPSU—more so than any other national group. She could also have noted that *everyone* in the USSR has their nationality stamped in their passports. Jews are not marked out as a stigmatized people.

2. Howell notes: "Most of the [Jewish] immigrants I met were not interested in religion." She makes nothing of this but it is a remarkable admission, quite contrary to the propaganda we have been fed about how Soviet Jews emigrate in pursuit of religious freedom. Howell never really tells us why the Soviet Jews come here. *ITT*'s front page comes to its own splashy conclusion: "Yearning to Be Free," but there is nothing in the story itself to support that headline. In fact, Howell writes: "The Soviet emigrés I've met were not looking for freedom from such authority when they came to America."

3. Upon seeing a black person, one of Howell's clients says, "Who's the nigger?" and Howell conjectures that this racist attitude results "from living in a country [the USSR] where the official anti-racist line bears no relationship to what happens in reality." I don't get this. Should the official line be changed to something closer to South Africa's because there are still bigots in Russia, a number of whom are migrating here? And since "nigger" is a term learned in Brighton Beach, not Moscow, shouldn't some of the blame be given to the society into which the immigrant is being socialized?

4. Howell tells us that the Soviet child care and maternity system, which sounds vastly superior to ours, "protects" but "infantilizes" people. That's what the Heritage Foundation has been saying about those kinds of services. But it seems to be okay to sound like the Heritage Foundation when talking about the Soviet Union.

5. Based on the anecdotal testimony of one "emigré colleague," Howell seems to conclude that the entire Soviet educational system is corrupt (teachers allegedly fix grades to make themselves look good). How the Soviets could have transformed a society of illiterate peasants and proletarians into a nation of scientists, technicians and skilled workers under those operational conditions is not explained.

It might be worth running an article

about the Soviet immigrants who are happy here. What are the immigrants' values, attitudes and pursuits? Why do so many of them like Ronald Reagan? What were they looking for when they came here if it wasn't freedom and it wasn't religion? Why are they happy with what they found? The answers might be very revealing.

Michael Parenti
Washington

Polly Howell replies: Yes, that would be an interesting article.

And, I did say why the Soviet Jews left the USSR: "To get away from the lie." The once deeply-held beliefs of the Soviet system are today largely hollow forms. The emigrés did not come looking for religious freedom in the sectarian sense; they did come searching for something to believe in, and they've had a hard time finding it here.

Soviet peace groups

NORMAN SOLOMON'S ESSAY ON SOVIET peace groups (*ITT*, Sept. 25) should not come as a startling revelation to anyone who displays a balanced opinion regarding the Soviet Union. Conservative Republican propaganda aside, Solomon shows that there is both a viable grassroots peace movement and a government sponsored peace organization active in the Soviet Union.

Whether this peace movement originates from a spontaneous citizen-activist phenomenon or a state-supported institution begs the question of whether or not the Soviet Union is sincere in its quest for world peace. Even the most cursory knowledge of modern Russian and Soviet history, and especially that of the Russian experience in World War II, will show that the Soviets have every reason to be obsessed with security (they, at least, cannot be accused of invading the U.S.—we cannot make the same claim vis-a-vis the Soviets—remember 1918?) and to seek world peace as a guarantee of security.

Both the Group to Establish Trust Between the USSR and USA and the government-sponsored Soviet Peace Committee should be encouraged. Both are manifestations of the larger peace movement active in virtually every corner of the globe. Neither Republican disbelief and distrust nor carping criticism from liberals regarding "legitimacy" should obscure this.

While it is impossible to expect the Reagan administration to recognize these two groups (Washington doesn't even want to recognize our peace groups), peace groups should open a dialog with them and extend recognition, solidarity and support. After all, we, both Russians and Americans, have only the whole of humanity to lose!

Harold N. Boyer
Delran, N.J.

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PERSPECTIVE

By Geoffrey Fox

BY THE YEAR 2000—IF present immigration and birth rates continue—the largest ethnic group in the United States will be Hispanic. Everything indicates that the country's response to this huge demographic change will be a critical factor determining the future course of our democracy and our foreign policy.

The struggle for full citizenship will be the major issue for Hispanics as they grow from an estimated 19.5 million today to 24.5 million or more by the end of the century. Full citizenship means more than the essential, but minimal, legal rights to reside here and to vote. It includes active, informed and effective participation in the economic and political system—something that has not always been available even to people born here.

In foreign policy, our Hispanic population growth is both a cause and effect of the peculiar character of U.S. policy toward Latin America. As Hispanic Americans become more numerous and more active in politics, the majority are likely to use their influence to redirect that policy away from military intervention and toward greater economic cooperation.

The people we call Hispanics, meaning they have Spanish heritage, are not one but several groups, relating in sharply different ways to our legal and political system. Nearly 60 percent of the total are said to be "of Mexican origin," but these in fact include U.S.-born-and-reared citizens (some of whose ancestors have lived in the Southwest for hundreds of years), naturalized immigrants, resident aliens and the "undocumented" who enjoy no legal right to be here.

Puerto Ricans (about 14 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population) are all citizens by birth, but have very different levels of participation in mainland life. Cubans (5.5 percent of the total) are mostly legal residents and, increasingly, naturalized citizens, having been protected over the years from deportation by special refugee status. The nearly 21 percent remaining are from every other country in Latin America and are of every imaginable status, including Central Americans in church "sanctuaries" and applicants for political asylum as well as citizens and residents, legal or not.

Because of these important legal and cultural differences, some Chicano and Puerto Rican writers object to the collective term "Hispanic," arguing that each group must be considered separately.

"There is no 'Hispanic vote,'" says Rodolfo de la Garza, head of the Chicano Studies Center at the University of Texas-Austin, since each set of voters is responding to its own particular local history. He also objects that the term has been used by conservative Cubans to set themselves up as spokespersons for people with very different needs and backgrounds. Similarly, in New York, Angelo Falcón of the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy says the concept "can hurt us," in that resources available for "Hispanics" will not necessarily go to the neediest but instead to the most visible groups.

These caveats should be kept in mind, but it would be a mistake to ignore areas where the concerns and objectives of various Hispanic groups coincide. And there are some signs that the convergences may increase.

Hispanic views

Hispanic voter registration rose 27 percent between 1980 and 1984—voting rose 26 percent—more than that of either white or black non-Hispanics. Some idea of Hispanics' views on policy can be gained from recent analyses of a nine-state survey of 6,000 Hispanic voters (plus another 1,000 non-Hispanics in Texas), questioned as they left the polls in the



Hispanic attitudes will alter politics

November 1984 election. The study, designed and coordinated by the Southwest Voters Registration and Education Project of San Antonio, Texas, asked for opinions on a series of domestic and foreign policy issues. Other participating organizations were the Midwest Voter Registration and Education Project (Chicago), the Hispanic Women's Center and the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy (New York) and the Cuban American Committee (Miami).

The main groups that have been analyzed so far (the data are rich enough to permit further analysis) are Texas Mexican-Americans (statewide), Los Angeles Mexican-Americans, Midwest Mexican-Americans and Midwest Puerto Ricans (in seven cities of six states), New York Puerto Ricans, New York Dominicans and Miami Cubans.

In all groups but the last, large majorities told interviewers they had voted for the Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale. The pro-Mondale sentiment ranged from 59 percent among Dominican New Yorkers to 82 percent among Mexican-Americans in the Midwest and well over 70 percent in other groups.

The exception, the Cubans of Miami, voted 93 percent for Ronald Reagan. Also, while over 60 percent of all the others considered themselves Democrats, 72 percent of the Cubans said they were Republicans.

The biggest differences between the Cubans and the others included their extremely strong support of increased defense spending (87 percent in favor, whereas only about a third of the others agreed) and for "more military aid to the government of El Salvador" and for the *contras* in Nicaragua (77 and 76 percent respectively, whereas every other group was opposed). These have been priority issues for Cuban Americans, who tend to oppose anything they believe Fidel Castro is for.

However, equally striking are the convergences. On several important policy questions, the Cubans are in substantial

agreement with Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and others, and in substantial disagreement with the Reagan administration.

For example, a majority of all groups are opposed to "cuts in social programs to reduce federal budget deficit" (wording from the interview questionnaire). This is despite the fact that 87 percent of the Cubans—compared to only about a third of the others—said they favored "the economic program of the current administration," which in fact calls for large cuts. A majority of all the groups polled also said they were in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment and of "a verifiable freeze on the production of nuclear weapons if

the Soviet Union agrees to do the same." In fact, the Miami Cubans, despite their Republicanism, had one of the strongest majorities for this position—72 percent.

Interestingly, 89 percent of the Cubans favor an amnesty for illegal immigrants, as compared to a bare majority of 52 percent of the Mexican-Americans in Texas, who are closer to the problem.

Convergences


But the most striking agreement of all comes on an issue that may turn out to be the most important for the future of pan-Hispanic coalitions. More than 90 percent of the Cubans and the New York Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, and well over 70 percent of every other group, declared themselves in favor of "increased spending on bilingual programs for children in public schools." The political implications of this consensus are even greater than they might at first appear.

Clearly, there are things that all these groups have in common and that justify the common term "Hispanic." The first and most important of these is the Spanish language. Accents vary, certain idioms and vocabulary are peculiar to particular groups and many U.S.-reared adults speak only a childlike version of Spanish, but still it is for most the first language and its syntax and assonances structure their most intimate thoughts. Thus there are ways of understanding that can create a certain *simpatía* among even the most dissimilar of Spanish-speakers.

Second, although this too is part of the language, is the knowledge of certain historical traditions, including Spanish colonization, the wars of liberation and the confrontations of all their homelands with the power of the United States.

And finally, there is one historical tradition that is part of the personal experience of many Hispanics, whether they are black, Indian or white, or Andean, Caribbean or Central American, and knowledge of this experience is passed on to others through the language: the experience of discrimination at the hands of English-speaking whites in the U.S.

In fact, the language sums up and implies all of these things, and it is not surprising that the one issue on which Hispanics are most in agreement is the need to preserve the Spanish language. It is not really a difference over pedagogical technique, but rather a deeply felt need for preserving one's personal and psychological integrity that gives the debate over bilingual education its fierce intensity. ■



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Mixed U.S. signals encourage invasion

By Shirley Washington

THE CURRENT FOCUS ON South Africa's dramatic internal struggles ought not obscure the South African government's related external activities in southern Africa. South African troops and planes recently invaded neighboring southern Angola for the third time this year.

Their declared purpose was, first, to prevent the fall of a base held by UNITA, the South Africa-backed rebel opposition to the Angolan government; and second, to thwart a possible offensive by Angola-based SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) guerrillas into Angola's southern neighbor, Namibia. How much this invasion was the South African government's attempt to divert public attention from its internal unrest, and how much it reflects the minority white regime's paranoia about being simultaneously swamped by black unrest internally and aggrieved black neighbors externally is difficult to discern.

White South African leaders' statements reveal their determination to dominate not only their non-white citizens but their weaker neighbors as well. They speak of a constellation of states, with South Africa at its center as a regional superpower protecting Western interests.

The greatest obstacle to these pretensions is the persistent and violent opposition of groups representing the oppressed in South Africa and Namibia. Therefore, the government of South Africa seeks to deprive those groups of their external aid and bases, without which, it contends, they would wither away.

As a nation that fought for its own independence and a vital member of the frontline states, Angola could not refuse refuge to fraternal organizations like Namibia's SWAPO and ANC (African National Congress), South Africa's oldest nationalist organization. But the Luanda government has paid dearly for its solidarity. Until last May, South Africa still had its troops 100 miles inside Angola, despite its pledge a year ago to withdraw its forces. South Africa's troops still hold an Angolan village containing a hydro-electric dam complex it partially financed during the colonial era. And now the latest cross-border raid, 60 miles inside Angola.

In defiance of United Nations resolutions, World Court decisions and international public opinion, South Africa has effectively annexed Namibia, the former German colony of South West Africa, which it was given to administer under a now invalid League of Nations mandate. Their occupation of this territory is being violently contested by SWAPO which for 19 years has waged a guerrilla war from neighboring nations, principally Angola.



South African soldiers at the border with Angola

South Africa is unwilling to contemplate a SWAPO victory, not only because it would lose its influence in Namibia, but because it then would be completely surrounded by hostile regimes and such a victory would be a powerful additional impetus to its own oppressed black majority.

When South Africa announced last spring it was withdrawing from Angola, it announced at the same time its imposition of an internal settlement on Namibia, with no free elections. And, of course, SWAPO has been excluded from that settlement. South Africa has since put in place a transition government, an action that the U.S. has condemned.

Encouraged by the cooperative attitude of Angola's president, Eduardo dos Santos, our State Department last spring was about to put forward a set of compromise

proposals to break this impasse. But just then South Africa secretly dispatched military teams to Angola, one of which was caught attempting to sabotage the American-owned oil installations at Cabinda, Angola's chief revenue source. Following that came an unprovoked South African commando raid on the capital of Botswana, a nation regarded as moderate by the Reagan administration. The target was the ANC, but several Botswana nationals, civilians included, were killed.

These events, coupled with the South African government's increasingly brutal police repression against its own black population, have led the Reagan administration to recall the American ambassador for consultations, something previous presidents have not done. And the U.S. supported a recent UN resolution condemning South Africa's violations of neighboring states' national borders.

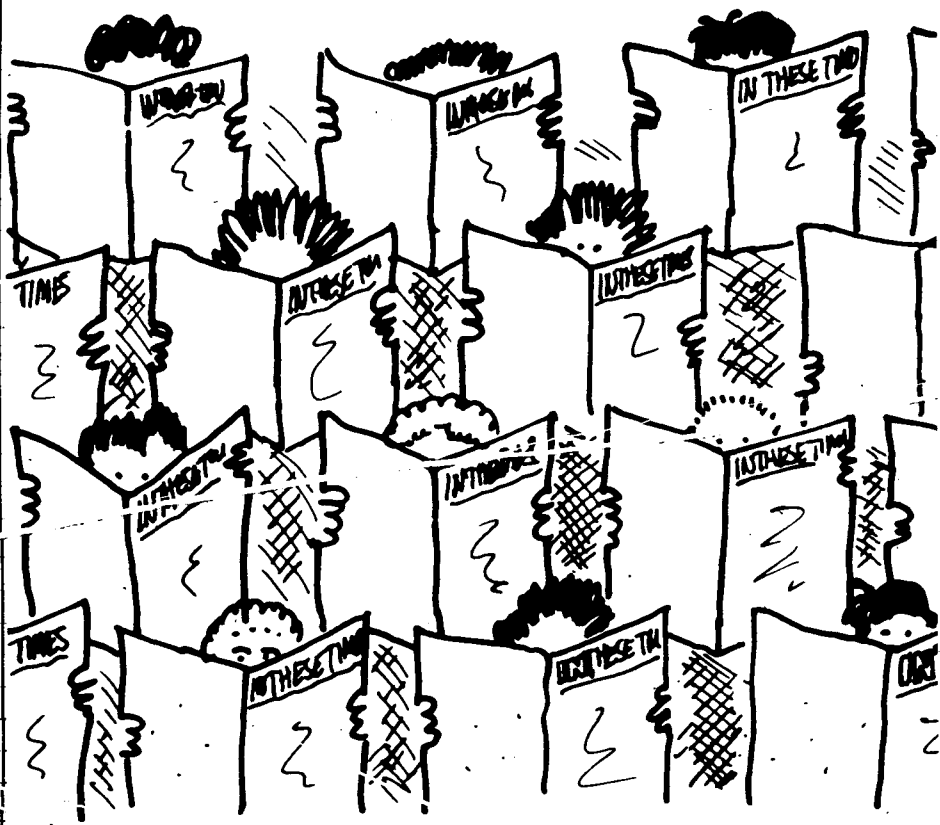
But despite these actions by the Reagan administration, South Africa continues to deal arrogantly and cynically with its neighboring black states. In part, Pretoria's attitude can be attributed to the mixed signals they have received from our administration. The president very reluctantly took a more definitive stance on mild economic sanctions only after Congress forced his hand. "Constructive engagement" has been widely interpreted by white South Africans as a wink at their past and present behavior toward their neighbors. And despite the violent response of the South African police against unarmed black demonstrators, the president is still able to characterize the Pretoria regime as "reformist." The Reagan administration refuses to acknowledge that it is South Africa's insistence on maintaining its internal system of racial oppression and its consequent fortress mentality that lie at the heart of the turmoil in southern Africa. Until that reality is drastically changed, neither justice nor safety will exist for the region's inhabitants. Our government must recognize this connection and seek actively and forcibly to end apartheid.

Shirley Washington, a former fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies and the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, is professor of political science at Wheaton College.



Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos

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Mrs. Munck
By Ella Leffland
Graywolf, 337 pp., \$8.00

Last Courtesies and Other Stories
By Ella Leffland
Graywolf, 218 pp., \$8.50

By Paul Skenazy

ELLA LEFFLAND HAS WRITTEN three wonderful novels—*Love Out of Season*, *Rumors of Peace* and *Mrs. Munck*—as well as the superb group of stories published as *Last Courtesies*. The latter two have just been reissued after being out of print for years. In each work, the characters live out their lives within and against the changing landscape of the Bay Area. She tells of people emerging from periods of withdrawal or stasis, forced to confront a clash of cultures at once temporal, spatial and sexual.

In *Mrs. Munck*, Leffland deftly parallels the title character's personal experiences with the transformation of Port Carquinez (Port Costa), once an Italian and Portuguese fishing village, into a resort and motel complex. We meet long-time resident Rose Munck immediately after her husband's death, as she is about to dedicate her widowhood to the care and persecution of Mr. Leary, her uncle-in-law. Leary is a 70-year-old invalid who, years before when Rose's boss, seduced and betrayed her, and was perhaps responsible for her baby daughter's death. Now, almost a baby himself in his incapacitated state, he is under her control.

Sacrificed to hatred

As her name implies, Rose was a "natural" creature when young: daughter of the farm, self-educated, dreamy, naive, optimistic; until, that is, her fateful meeting with Leary. Since then, she has sacrificed herself to hatred, living "like a nun...a priest" in the hermitage provided by her sense of victimhood. Solitary walks and endless reading have insulated her from her husband, her community and her own body.

Leary's presence (his name, too, suggests his essential character) reignites not only her passion for revenge but with it her memory, and her self-interest. She buys new clothes and a car, begins to talk to her neighbors, confronts the startling changes in her hometown and becomes involved with Husar, the broker for the resort company that wants to remake Port Carquinez. Her attraction to the developer suggests her vulnerability to the new forces of change that surround her, but Rose remains a holdout: the last homeowner who hasn't sold, whose private mission has preserved her from the greed that has overcome the rest of the community. Port Carquinez, with its grotesque outcroppings, its faded citizenry and its hidden natural wonders is like Rose's own craggy, broken surface of personality, yet Husar and his companions can only see both as opportunities for cosmetic surgery.

The tension of past and present, the known and the unfamiliar, the security of hatred and the danger of love and sexual desire climax for Rose in a series of surprising confrontations: with Leary, with Husar and with her own mother back on the farm. Rose needs to recognize her own stake in her years of self-denial, realize the consequences of her resistance to Husar and his plans and see both the fatality of her interest in the "circle of the dead" and the possibilities available in indepen-

dence.

Mrs. Munck is an angry book, given life by the intensity of a woman's hatred for a man and for a world dominated by compacts between the sexes that demand that women either submit to ordained roles or find their way in the world alone. The novel seems to suggest that for a woman, the two words of the title are redundant; marriage itself is portrayed as a mockery of love, sustained only by the inner lifelessness of the female.

At the same time, *Mrs. Munck* is not so much about a struggle between the sexes as it is a moving description of how personality can be stunted, and redeveloped. Rose is able to reassess the intricacy of her struggles for selfhood among conventions that control both genders: conventions that play their part in her mother's decision to find satisfaction as the long-suffering female attendant of several men, Husar's ambition to reconstruct the little fishing community into a playground for the vacationer and Rose's own determination to take solace in revenge.

Fourteen stories

On a smaller scale, the 14 stories of *Last Courtesies* describe similar situations of disorientation and discomfort. Generations, times and cultures collide, their different moralities and ideals rub bruisingly against each other.

Almost all the characters live, or travel, within the environments foreign to them. This is literally the case in several tales about young Americans wandering through Europe and elsewhere, and in other stories about Danes displaced in the U.S. and the Philippines and Russians seeking "last courtesies" in San Francisco.

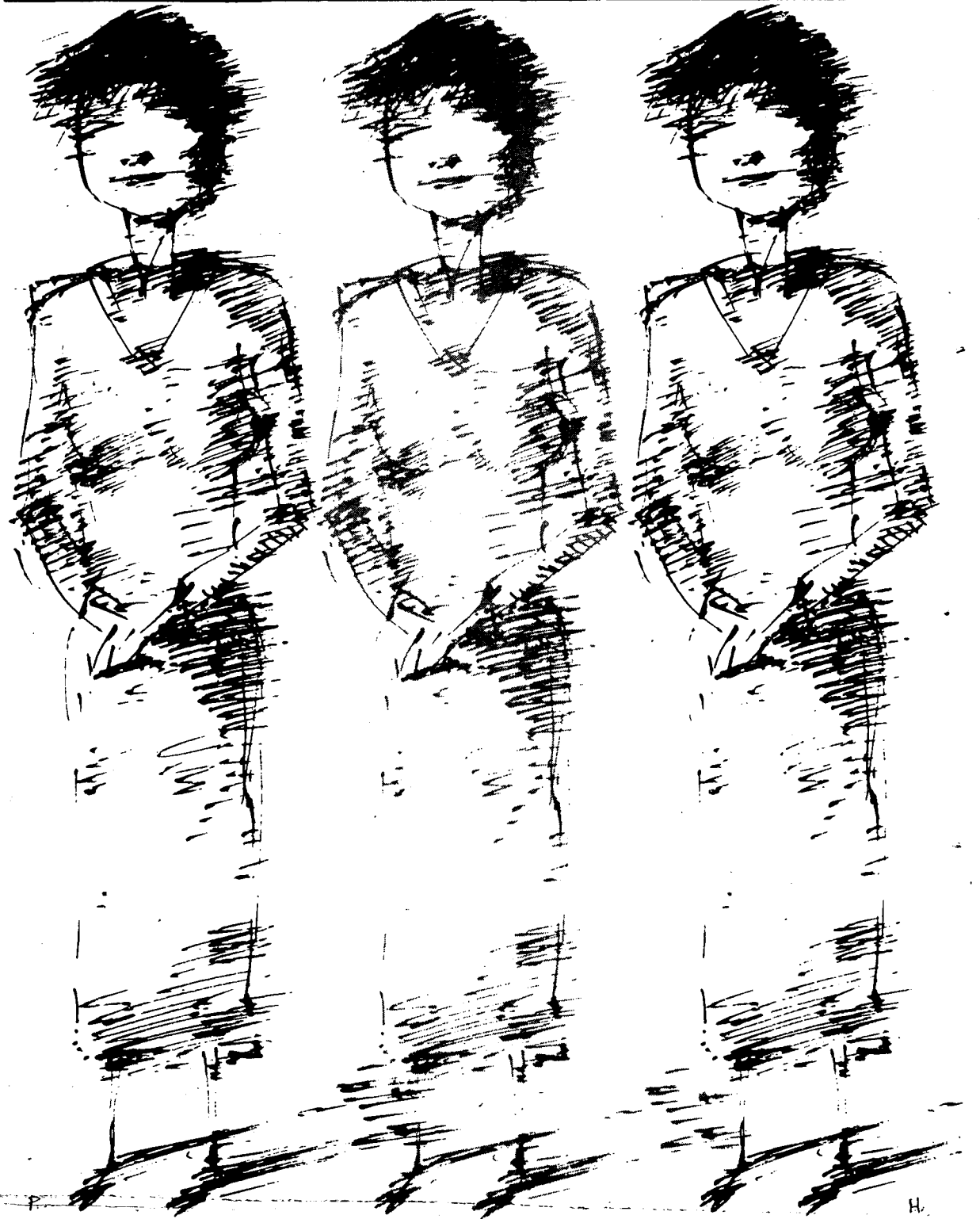
But the sense of foreignness is more metaphorically true of the book as a whole. Whether alone or with others, Leffland's people share an uncomfortable privacy and a damning inability to admit their discomfort to anyone else. Her people are least at home with, and in, themselves. They commune with objects, fill their world with ghosts, develop confirming lies about the past.

In almost all the stories, characters displace themselves onto the environment or project their frustrations onto other people, or into unknown belief systems, imagined traditions, ideals of a better and simpler time. The hopeful young artist of "Monsieur Scream" travels to the village where his father once lived hoping to prove himself. The young woman of "Vienna, City of My Dreams" begs and bribes a couple in a pension for the commonest form of notice. The woman in "Inside" is convinced that people who "stare" at her in parks or museums know the secret of her soul that she blames her father for never revealing to her.

Displaced Americans

Many of the young, displaced Americans who make up the majority of Leffland's protagonists are wandering from families who have ignored or discouraged them. The recognition they seek from others suggests that their vulnerability is a bitter aftertaste of childhood rejection and emotional frigidity that is both personal and cultural. They travel through Europe desperate and greedy, anxious to be absorbed into some imagined Old World of decorum, taste and beauty, anxious to discover a land ruled by time-honored relations among people, and between people and the sanctities of culture.

INPRINT



LITERATURE

Displaced Americans find home in Leffland's fiction



Ella Leffland

What they find instead are aged citizens who disregard their entreaties or misunderstand their requests or poor workers trapped in the wearing despair of their mundane habits. Against American projections and hopes, the Europeans offer their daily lives and the exactments of poverty.

There is a resistance to normality in the single-minded obses-

The majority of Leffland's protagonists are wandering from families who have ignored or discouraged them.

sions of Leffland's characters; they attempt to deny their commonality with the confused and compromised conditions of everyday life. But the stories also challenge the pieties offered by liberalism and embedded in the life-denying comforts and securities of marriage and family. Only perhaps in "The Linden Tree," about a gay man facing the

imminent death of his lover, does one find an accommodation that is not a defeat. The approach of death offers no vain comforts. But at least there is a community of shared feelings between the two men of this tale that has weathered time, helped them to soothe the raw fibers of desire with the balm of shared days, shared frustrations and pleasures, shared tastes.

These two books are Leffland's finest works, and it is a pleasure to see them made available again. They define an unaccommodating world, peopled by creatures uncomfortable with each other, often robbed even of the privilege of self-intimacy. But if they at times seem dark products of a troubled imagination, they are never gloomy. Leffland writes so knowingly, and so well, that one feels enlightened, not defeated—privileged to discover more about our private ploys and stingy ways with love, aroused by new comprehensions, prompted to a heightened attention.

Paul Skenazy teaches literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

By Robert Hurwitt

THE FIRST TIME I SAW the San Francisco Mime Troupe was one of those rare liberating moments in the theater when I felt as if someone had ripped the scales from my eyes. It was 1965 in Berkeley, Calif., and the play was called *A Minstrel Show, or Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel* by Saul Landau and R.G. Davis.

I had been a civil rights worker for several years, first in Harlem and then, the previous summer, in Louisiana, and had just finished my one and only year of graduate study, majoring in the Free Speech Movement. I went primed for an evening of lively entertainment peppered with liberal attitudes, a bit leery of the very idea of something so degrading historically as a minstrel show. Nothing I had ever seen before prepared me for what I saw that night.

The show started out in standard minstrel format. There was the tall white Interlocutor, the master of ceremonies displaying the antics of his stereotypical buffoons—six performers in exaggerated black-face (three blacks and three whites; which was which was never revealed). There were the typical banter, corny jokes, cake-walks and “darkie” songs.

And slowly, bit by bit, there was an air of tension emerging that suddenly erupted and blew the lid off the whole proceedings. The play went well beyond cheering on the liberal, anti-segregation attitudes of its Northern audiences. It was a radical look at the roots of racism and raised issues that people involved in the Civil Rights movement were only beginning to

Silber first saw the San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1973 in Madison, Wisc., where he was filming his award-winning *The War at Home*. He says he realized at the time that somebody had to do a film about the company and he hoped it would be him. Other films and television documentaries came first, however—shows about El Salvador and Nicaragua.

He next saw the Mime Troupe in 1983 with his wife and partner Claudia Vianello and she shared his enthusiasm. *Troupers*, their documentary on the Mime Troupe, premiered October 3 at the Castro Theater in San Francisco and moved to the York in the same city for a week. It opens in Los Angeles November 14, with future showings in other cities somewhat dependent on its success in those venues.

Mixing Techniques

As Silber points out, *Troupers* mixes several different documentary techniques: *cinéma vérité*, using a lot of footage of the Troupe in rehearsal, collective meetings, on tour, plus live interviews with current and former members; historical compilation, drawing on earlier films (*Have You Heard of the San Francisco Mime Troupe?*, Robert Nelson's *Plastic Haircut*) and rare footage of events in the '60s that set the scene for the Troupe; and actual performance sequences that give some sense of the Troupe at their best.

What emerges from this mix is a remarkable composite portrait of what the subtitle somewhat grandiloquently, if not entirely inaccurately, identifies as “the most outspoken theater company in America.”

Silber and Vianello manage to

ART»ENTERTAINMENT



“Dictators” Mobutu (Audrey Smith), Marcos (Melecio Magdaluyo) and Pinochet (Dan Chumley) perform in a scene from *Troupers*.

Coyote, Peter Berg, Judy Rosenberg and rock promoter Bill Graham. Given the strictures of an hour-and-a-half commercial film, much of this historical material remains regrettably sketchy, however, especially in tracing the Troupe's place in the history of American theater.

mance style in which broad physical characterizations are meant to communicate as much to the audience as the words of the script—a style uniquely suited to the Mime Troupe's long tradition of outdoor performances.

It wasn't until 1963 that the company, having severed its ties to the Actors Workshop, took its current name. Within a few short years, the San Francisco Mime Troupe was a sprawling, chaotic organization of some 60 to 80 members, a remarkably prolific source of experimental and politically engaged theater pieces. Some, like the *Minstrel Show*, were superb pieces, years ahead of their time. Others were embarrassingly inept, even in retrospect.

The Troupe was everywhere: producing shows indoors and in the parks, working up special skits for demonstrations, children's puppet plays, street theater, benefits—both for political organizations and for itself—taking shows on the road and getting busted everywhere from San Francisco to Denver and Calgary in Canada.

Missing pieces

Some sense of those tumultuous years comes across in *Troupers*, but a great deal is missing. We get a taste of the Troupe's experimental side in the film clips from *Plastic Haircut*, and a fair helping of its political thrust in the '60s through some highly-charged scenes from the *Minstrel Show* and footage of Troupe members engaged in a 1967 demonstration against Dow recruiters on a Midwestern campus.

We also see how the Troupe's need for bail money, stemming from political arrests, led to the creation of the psychedelic light show rock concerts that became a hallmark of San Francisco's counterculture in the '60s. This, in turn, led to a highly profitable career for the Troupe's former business manager, Bill Graham. What is missing from this picture, however, is a sense of the Troupe's seminal importance in the development of radical theater in America.

Along with the Bread and Puppet Theater in New York, the San

Francisco Mime Troupe was in the vanguard of a movement to demystify theater as “high culture” and take it to the streets, back to the people. This movement also sought to shake off the legacy of McCarthyism which, in the '50s, had succeeded in making American theater less likely to grapple with real social or political issues than almost any other theater in the world.

The Mime Troupe itself spawned, directly and indirectly, a host of other agitprop, alternative and politically engaged companies, as well as sparking a general return to broad, physically-based performance techniques. Among its offspring may be counted such influential groups as the Dell'Arte Players, the Pickle Family Circus and its many offspring, the feminist company Lilith and El Teatro Campesino, which sired the entire Chicano teatro movement.

The Mime Troupe even spun off its own political group, the anarchist Diggers, founded by Peter Berg, Judy Rosenberg and Emmett Grogan. This group began as an internal company faction and became an important political force in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury scene, feeding and housing the hordes of runaways who flocked there, providing a political alternative to “flower power,” and staging demonstrations against capitalist exploitation, hip and straight alike.

More important, *Troupers* also fails to come to grips with the Mime Troupe as a political theater company. We are shown the political stances taken in the excerpts from company productions, but we are not shown the political process by which these positions are decided.

There is also, perhaps by accident of cutting, what appears to be a bit of historical misinformation in the film. R.G. Davis and the Mime Troupe parted company in 1970. The split was a bitter one, exacerbated by personality conflicts and divided loyalties, but was centered around issues of democratic collectivism. Davis' efforts to mold a radical theater company had proven too successful for its politicized workers to submit any longer to his autocratic

Troupers shows San Francisco Mime Troupe at its best.

rule (for the past 15 years the company has been a worker-controlled collective, about half male, half female, approximately one-third each black, white and Latino).

A cut from the account of Davis' departure to the Troupe's next show, *The Independent Female*, gives a strong impression that the move to oust Davis was a feminist revolt—an impression that would be strongly denied by both parties and that distracts from the real political issues in question.

Despite its shortcomings, *Troupers* delivers an important message loud and clear: that it is possible, however great the odds, for cultural workers to create socially and politically meaningful art, and that there is an audience for such work. It's a message that needs to be heard.

Robert Hurwitt is associate editor of the *East Bay Express*.

Troupers is available from Icarus Films, 200 Park Ave. South, Rm. 1319, New York, NY 10003, (212) 674-3375.

DOCUMENTARY

Still miming for the cause



air in public: integration versus assimilation, the role of whites in the movement's leadership, class issues between working-class blacks and middle-class “Negroes,” even—in its most controversial and shocking scene—issues of racism and sexism in an interracial one-night stand.

Less than a year later I was a member of the Mime Troupe, working in the office, understudying two roles in the *Minstrel Show*, directing workshop productions, acting in that summer's free show in the parks.

Documentary filmmaker Glenn

convey not only the vitality, polish and political punch of the Troupe's best work, but also the dedication and the sheer sweat that goes into that work. The film brings to life some of the personalities that make up the collective and reveals some of the divisions, personal and political, that shake, shape and ultimately energize the collective's work.

The filmmakers also manage to some extent to place the Troupe's work within its own now 26-year-old continuum, both through the historical footage and interviews with former Mime Troupers Peter

Sharon Lockwood (left), Wilma Bonet and Audrey Smith perform a skit from the play *Steeltown* in the documentary *Troupers*.

For the record, the San Francisco Mime Troupe was founded pretty much single-handedly by R.G. Davis in 1959 as the R.G. Davis Mime Studio and Troupe, an experimental wing of the influential Actors Workshop. Though Davis himself was a classically trained mime, the Troupe has generally eschewed the practice of the silent art of pantomime. The “Mime” in the company's name refers rather to a perfor-

France

Continued from page 7

New Zealand, among other things—than previous versions. The newspaper was using its prestige to tell Mitterrand how to run his crisis. For a couple of days there, policy was made on the pages of *Le Monde*.

Perhaps the apex of this exploit was the front-page essay entitled "Defeat is an Orphan" (quoting J.F. Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs) by *Le Monde's* director André Fontaine, offering Mitterrand sage counsel in *realpolitik*. The whole business would have been no more than a *bavure* (snafu) if the government hadn't dawdled, he wrote. "For finally, at the risk of shocking some people, it is necessary to insist on the point that the attack against the *Rainbow Warrior* did not go noticeably beyond what is, alas! current practice of the secret services of the most democratic countries." All precautions had been taken to sink the boat without killing anyone, and the death of the Portuguese photographer was an unforeseen accident. "It would have been so much easier if one had agreed to kill deliberately, to destroy the boat at sea: out of sight and unknown. Thank God, this wasn't done!

"One can, of course, in the name of a passably angelic conception of politics, reject the very principle of an operation of this type and suppress the DGSE Action service: it has no other purpose. But in that case this reasoning must be carried through to its logical conclusion, and no longer resign ourselves to letting sales of arms, destined to kill by definition, constitute one of

the most flourishing activities of the French economy."

Fontaine didn't have to say more about how unthinkable such a conclusion would be. Incidentally, the prevailing cynicism is illustrated by the new frequency in the political vocabulary of the words "angelic" or "angelism"—a psychological term defined as an "abnormal desire to escape from the conditions of bodily existence"—to stigmatize any demand for ethical or humanitarian standards in politics.

Mitterrand could be reproached for procrastination, Fontaine wrote, but not for "criminal intent, or else every chief of state or almost would be, at one moment or another, a criminal. There was a *bavure*...."

"What would be dramatic," concluded Fontaine, getting around to serious matters, would be to let a "fiasco be turned into a crime" and thereby undermine either the fine feeling existing today between the country and the army or put into question the "fundamental consensus" on nuclear arms policy.

No one in sight is questioning that consensus.

Tough Foreign Legion veteran General René Imbot took over the DGSE. As army chief of staff, Imbot recently organized France's version of the rapid deployment force, the *Force d'Action Rapide*. Having spent a year at the U.S. Command Staff College at Fort Leavenworth and three years as French liaison officer at the NATO nuclear planning group in Heidelberg, Imbot is undoubtedly a key officer in integrating French forces into U.S. global strategy.

After only two days at his new job, the

general went on TV to announce that he had discovered "a veritable malicious operation of destabilization, even destruction of our secret services" inside the DGSE. He said he had already "cut off the rotten branches" and put together a solid team that would go forward to protect France's role as one of the five nuclear great powers in the world. Any further press reports claiming to emanate from DGSE sources would be "lies," he declared, as he had "bolted this service shut."

That was that. But Imbot's strangely suc-

inct "revelation" about a stupefying destabilization operation inside the DGSE could only fuel speculation on the right about "foreign powers"—from British intelligence to the KGB—and speculation on the left about right-wing plots to frame Mitterrand. Fabius himself hinted at "sabotage of the sabotage." Many people on the left would rather believe in a right-wing or "Anglo-Saxon" plot—which is not impossible—than in Mitterrand's own direct responsibility—which is even less impossible.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **ITT Calendar**.

CHICAGO, IL

October 13

The Mirror Image Theatre Company presents *Saved*—the shocking comedy by Edward Bond. Performances Fridays at 8:00 p.m., Saturdays at 6:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., Sundays at 3:00 p.m. Chicago Actors' Project, 2856 N. Halsted. Tickets at door, or call (312) 880-5263.

October 19

Benefit Dance Party for Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and IN THESE TIMES, Saturday, October 19th, 8:00 p.m. to midnight at Cross Currents, 3204 N. Wilton (at Belmont El), with host DJ Bill Zayas, from WFYR, 103.5 FM, the Horizons show. Featuring the best in contemporary Latin and Afro-Cuban music.

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SANTA CRUZ, CA

October 19

Isabel & Angel Parra of Chile sing for peace and justice in the Americas, Saturday, October 19, 1985, 8:00 p.m., Santa Cruz High School Auditorium. Special guests Mardi Wormhoudt, John Laird, Mauricio Longoria. \$6.50 in advance at Cymbaline Records (Santa Cruz 423-3949), Blue Rhythm Records (Capitola 475-5148), Bread & Roses Bookstore (San Jose 294-2930), Recycle Records (Pacific Grove 375-5454), Gadsby's Music (Salinas 424-6421); \$8.00 at the door. For information call (408) 425-8493.

WASHINGTON, DC

October 25-26

Steeltown, the San Francisco Mime Troupe's musical comedy following the American labor movement, unfolds Friday & Saturday, October 25 & 26, at the Department of Commerce's Herbert Hoover Auditorium. Performances are at 8:00 PM each evening with a Saturday afternoon matinee at 2:00 PM. For information call Common Concerns Bookstore: (202) 463-6500.

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MUSIC AND CULTURE HAVE always accompanied hard times and struggle in the labor movement. The struggles of the IWW, the bloody wars in Harlan County and the formation of the CIO spawned the music and working-class culture we have come to associate with the labor movement.

The boom times of the 1950s and 1960s fostered a kind of quiet unionism that seemed more interested in improving the image of unions in middle-class eyes than in expressing working-class culture. The music and cultural artifacts that did express that culture came from outside the labor movement proper, most notably from the civil rights and women's move-

The recent wave of hard times, however, is bringing music of working-class culture back into the labor movement. Unemployed steelworkers like Mike Pickering have been making records to raise money for unemployment projects, women's music has become increasingly interested in working women's themes, and rock singers like Billy Joel and Bruce Springsteen have focused on working-class topics.

This resurgence has also spawned *Talkin' Union*, an independent magazine dedicated to the music, history and folklore of the labor movement. Taking its name from the classic labor ballad written in the 1940s by Almanac Singers, (a group containing Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie) *Talkin' Union's* focus is on labor music.

The magazine grew out of a 1981 gathering of labor singers in Washington, D.C. According to editor Saul Schniderman, "I invited participants of that event to write down their experiences and when 20 people responded the first issue of the magazine was born."

By the third issue, *TU* settled into a format and style of presentation that has become its norm and its strength: stylistic diversity. *Talkin' Union* could have become merely a publication of

left folk songs about labor's past, and although this heritage is an important part of the magazine's concerns, editor Schniderman strives hard to integrate the past and present, in addition to presenting a multitude of musical styles.

For example, he uses the voice of Con Carbon, a legendary 19th-century labor singer from the anthracite region of Pennsylvania, to report on current happenings. A recent issue's cover photo and lead story about Bruce Springsteen may have offended some labor music purists, but it is part of Schniderman's ongoing strategy of diversity. Reports on union singing in South Africa, on Paul Robeson and Latin American folklore remind us of the multi-cultural nature of the labor movement.

Even with this focus on music, *TU* is not only for singers and musicians. Issues often contain essays on labor art in general, as well as occasional pieces on labor history written in an accessible style.

In keeping with its cultural focus, it is also peppered with art, photographs, cartoons and poetry. Most striking are its covers which are always full-page photographs, often historical gems.

Despite the magazine's growing popularity and circulation, it is facing an uphill financial battle. Because it is not officially sponsored by a single union or a group of unions, it relies solely on income from subscriptions. Schniderman has recently sent out an appeal for funds and hopes that donations and increasing subscriptions will help him keep *Talkin' Union* alive as one of the few sources of working-class culture available today. *Talkin' Union* is available from Box 5349, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Subscriptions are \$7.50 for individuals and \$12.00 for libraries and unions. ■

Tom Juravich teaches labor studies at Penn State University, and his album *Rising Again* was produced by the United Auto Workers.

By
Tom Juravich



***Talkin' Union* is perhaps this country's only magazine dedicated to promoting the music, history and folklore of the labor movement.**